

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER, 1869.

Put Yourself in His Place.

CHAPTER XIII.



F MR. COVENTRY, before he set all this mischief moving, could have seen the *inside* of Grace Carden's letter to Henry Little !

"DEAR MR. LITTLE,—I do not know whether I ought to write to you at all, nor whether it is delicate of me to say what I am going; but you have saved my life, and I do so want to do all I can to atone for the pain I have given you, who have been so good to me. I am afraid you will never know happiness, if you waste your invaluable life longing after what is impossible. There is an impassable barrier be-

tween you and me. But you might be happy if you would condescend to take my advice, and let yourself see the beauty and the goodness of another. The person who bears this letter comes nearer to perfection than any other woman I ever saw. If you would trust my judgment (and, believe me, I am not to be mistaken in one of my own sex), if you

could turn your heart towards her, she would make you very happy. I am sure she could love you devotedly, if she only heard those words from your lips, which every woman requires to hear before she surrenders her affections. Pray do not be angry with me ; pray do not think it costs me little to give this strange but honest advice to one I admire so. But I feel it would be so weak and selfish in me to cling to that, which, sooner or later, I must resign, and to make so many persons unhappy, when all might be happy, except perhaps myself.

"Once more, forgive me. Do not think me blind ; do not think me heartless ; but say, this is a poor girl, who is sadly perplexed, and is trying very hard to be good and wise, and not selfish.

"One line, to say you will consider my advice, and never hate nor despise

"Your grateful and unhappy friend,

"GRACE CARDEN."

When she had despatched this letter, she felt heroic.

The next day, she wished she had not written it, and awaited the reply with anxiety.

The next day, she began to wonder at Little's silence ; and by-and-by she was offended at it. Surely what she had written with so great an effort was worth reply.

Finally, she got it into her head that Little despised her. Upon this, she was angry with him for not seeing what a sacrifice she had made, and for despising her, instead of admiring her a little, and pitying her ever so much. The old story in short—a girl vexed with a man for letting her throw dust in his eyes.

And, if she was vexed with Little for not appreciating her sacrifice, she was quite as angry with Coventry and Jael for being the causes of that unappreciated sacrifice. So then she was irritable and cross. But she could not be that long ; so she fell into a languid, listless state : and then she let herself drift. She never sent Jael to the church again.

Mr. Coventry watched all her moods ; and, when she reached the listless stage, he came softly on again, and began to recover his lost ground.

'On the fifth of January occurred a rather curious coincidence. In Hillsborough Dr. Amboyne offered his services to Mrs. Little to reconcile her and her brother. Mrs. Little feared the proposal came too late ; but showed an inclination to be reconciled for Henry's sake. But Henry said he would never be reconciled to a man who had insulted his mother. He then reminded her she had sent him clandestinely into Raby Hall to see her picture. "And what did I see ? Your picture was turned with its face to the wall, and insulting words written on the back,—'Gone into trade.' I didn't mean to tell you, mother ; but you see I have. And, after that, you may be reconciled to the old scoundrel if you like ;

but don't ask me." Mrs. Little was deeply wounded by this revelation. She tried to make light of it, but failed. She had been a beauty, and the affront was too bitter. Said she, " You mustn't judge him like other people : he was always so very eccentric. Turn my picture to the wall ! My poor picture ! Oh, Guy, Guy, could one mother have borne you and me ? " Amboyne had not a word more to say : he was indignant himself.

Now that very afternoon, as if by the influence of what they call a brain-wave, Grace Carden, who felt herself much stronger with Mr. Raby than when she first came, was moved to ask him, with many apologies, and no little inward tremor, whether she might see the other side of that very picture before she went.

" What for ? "

" Don't be angry, uncle dear. Curiosity."

" I do not like to refuse you anything, Grace. But—— Well, if I lend you the key, will you satisfy your curiosity, and then replace the picture as it is ? "

" Yes, I will."

" And you shall do it when I am not in the room. It would only open wounds that time has skinned. I'll bring you down the key at dinner-time." Then, assuming a lighter tone, " Your curiosity will be punished ; you will see your rival in beauty. That will be new to you."

Grace was half frightened at her own success, and I doubt whether she would ever have asked for the key again ; but Raby's word was his bond ; he handed her the key at dinner-time.

Her eyes sparkled when she got it ; but she was not to open it before him ; so she fell thinking : and she determined to get the gentlemen into the drawing-room as soon as she could, and then slip back and see this famous picture.

Accordingly she left the table rather earlier than usual, and sat down to her piano in the drawing-room.

But alas, her little manœuvre was defeated. Instead of the gentlemen leaving the dining-room, a servant was sent to recall her.

It was old Christmas Eve, and the Mummers were come.

Now, of all the old customs Mr. Raby had promised her, this was the pearl.

Accordingly, her curiosity took for the time another turn, and she was soon seated in the dining-room, with Mr. Raby and Mr. Coventry, awaiting the Mummers.

The servants then came in, and, when all were ready, the sound of a fiddle was heard, and a fiddler, grotesquely dressed, entered along with two clowns, one called the Tommy, dressed in chintz and a fox's skin over his shoulders and a fox's head for a cap ; and one, called the Bessy, in a woman's gown and beaver hat.

This pair introduced the true *dramatis personæ*, to the drollest violin

accompaniment, consisting of chords till the end of each verse, and then a few notes of melody.

Now the first that I call on
Is George our noble king,
Long time he has been at war,
Good tidings back he'll bring.
Too-ral-loo.

Thereupon in came a man, with black breeches and red stripes at the side, a white shirt decked with ribbons over his waistcoat, and a little hat with streamers, and a sword.

The clown walked round in a ring, and King George followed him, holding his sword upright.

Meantime the female clown chanted,—

The next that we call on,
He is a squire's son,
He's like to lose his love,
Because he is so young.
Too-ral-loo.

The Squire's Son followed King George round the ring; and the clowns, marching and singing at the head, introduced another, and then another, sword-dancer, all attired like the first, until there were five marching round and round, each with his sword upright.

Then Foxey sang, to a violin accompaniment,

Now, fiddler, then, take up thy fiddle,
Play the lads their hearts' desire,
Or else we'll break thy fiddle,
And fling thee a back o' the fire.

On this the fiddler instantly played a dance-tune peculiar to this occasion, and the five sword-dancers danced by themselves in a ring, holding their swords out so as to form a cone.

Then a knot, prepared beforehand, was slipped over the swords, and all the swords so knotted were held aloft by the first dancer; he danced in the centre awhile, under the connected swords, then deftly drew his own sword out and handed it to the second dancer; the second gave the third dancer his sword, and so on, in rotation, till all the swords were resumed.

Raby's eyes sparkled with delight at all this, and he whispered his comments on the verses and the dance.

“King George!” said he. “Bosh! This is the old story of St. George and the Dragon, overburdened with modern additions.” As to the dance, he assured her that, though danced in honour of old Christmas, it was older than Christianity, and came from the ancient Goths and Swedes.

These comments were interrupted by a man, with a white face, who burst into the assembly crying, “Will ye believe me now? Cairnhope old church is all a-fire!”

CHAPTER XIV.

"Ay, Squire," said Abel Eaves, for he was the bearer of this strange news, "ye wouldn't believe me: now come and see for yourself."

This announcement set all staring; and George the blacksmith did but utter the general sentiment, when, suddenly dropping his assumed character of King George, he said, "Bless us and save us! True Christmas Eve; and Cairnhope old church alight!"

Then there was a furious buzz of tongues, and, in the midst of it, Mr. Raby disappeared, and the sword-dancers returned to the kitchen, talking over this strange matter as they went.

Grace retired to the drawing-room followed by Coventry.

She sat silent some time, and he watched her keenly.

"I wonder what has become of Mr. Raby?"

Mr. Coventry did not know.

"I hope he is not going out."

"I should think not. It is a very cold night; clear, but frosty."

"Surely he would never go to see."

"Shall I inquire?"

"No; that might put it into his head. But I wish I knew where he was."

Presently a servant brought the tea in.

Miss Carden inquired after Mr. Raby.

"He is gone out, Miss; but he won't be long, I was to tell you."

Grace felt terribly uneasy and restless; rang the bell and asked for Jael Dence. The reply was that she had not been to the hall that day.

But, soon afterwards, Jael came up from the village, and went into the kitchen of Raby. There she heard news, which soon took her into the drawing-room.

"Oh, Miss," said she, "do you know where the Squire is?"

"Gone to the church?" asked Grace, trembling.

"Ay, and all the sword-dancers at his back." And she stood there and wrung her hands with dismay.

The ancients had a proverb, "Better is an army of stags with a lion for their leader, than an army of lions with a stag for their leader." The Cairnhope sword-dancers, though stout fellows and strong against a mortal foe, were but stags against the supernatural; yet, led by Guy Raby, they advanced upon the old church with a pretty bold front, only they kept twenty yards in their leader's rear. The order was to march in dead silence.

At the last turn in the road their leader suddenly halted, and, kneeling on one knee, waved to his men to keep quiet: he had seen several dark figures busy about the porch.

After many minutes of thrilling, yet chilling, expectation, he rose and told his men in a whisper, to follow him again,

The pace was now expedited greatly, and still Mr. Raby, with his double-barrelled gun in his hand, maintained a lead of some yards, and his men followed as noiselessly as they could, and made for the church : sure enough it was lighted inside.

The young man who was thus beset by two distinct bands of enemies, deserved a very different fate at the hands of his fellow-creatures.

For, at this moment, though anything but happy himself, he was working some hours every day for the good of mankind ; and was every day visiting as a friend the battered saw-grinder who had once put his own life in mortal peril.

He had not fathomed the letter Grace had sent him. He was a young man and a straightforward ; he did not understand the amiable defects of the female character. He studied every line of this letter, and it angered and almost disgusted him. It was the letter of a lady ; but beneath the surface of gentleness and politeness lay a proposal, which he considered mean and cold-blooded. It lowered his esteem for her.

His pride and indignation were roused, and battled with his love, and they were aided by the healthy invigorating habits, into which Dr. Amboyne had at last inveigled him, and so he resisted : he wrote more than one letter in reply to Grace Carden ; but, when he came to read them over and compare them with her gentle effusion, he was ashamed of his harshness, and would not send the letter.

He fought on ; philanthropy in Hillsborough, forging in Cairnhope Church ; and still he dreamed strange dreams now and then : for who can work, both night and day, as this man did—with impunity ?

One night he dreamed that he was working at his forge, when suddenly the floor of the aisle burst, and a dead knight sprang from the grave with a single bound, and stood erect before him, in rusty armour : out of his helmet looked two eyes like black diamonds, and a nose like a falcon's. Yet, by one of the droll contradictions of a dream, this impetuous, warlike form no sooner opened its lips, than out issued a lackadaisical whine. "See my breastplate, good sir," said he. "It was bright as silver when I made it—I was like you, I forged my own weapons, forged them with these hands.—But now the damps of the grave have rusted it. Odsbodikins ! is this a thing for a good knight to appear in before his judge ? And to-morrow is Doomsday, so they all say."

Then Henry pitied the poor simple knight (in his dream), and offered his services to polish the corslet up a bit against that great occasion. He pointed towards his forge, and the knight marched to it, in three wide steps that savoured strongly of theatrical burlesque. But the moment he saw the specimens of Henry's work lying about, he drew back, and wheeled upon the man of the day with huge disdain. "What," said he, "do you forge toys ! Learn that a gentleman can only forge those weapons of war that gentlemen do use. And I took you for a Raby!"

With these bitter words he vanished, with flashing eyes and a look of magnificent scorn, and left his fiery, haughty, features imprinted clearly on Henry's memory.

One evening, as he plied his hammer, he heard a light sound at a window, in an interval of his own noise. He looked hastily up, and caught a momentary sight of a face disappearing from the window. It was gone like a flash even as he caught sight of it.

Transient as the glance was, it shook him greatly. He heated a bar of iron white hot at one end, and sallied out into the night. But there was not a creature to be seen.

Then he called aloud, "Who's there?" No reply. "Jael, was it you?" Dead silence.

He returned to his work, and set the appearance down to an ocular illusion. But his dreams had been so vivid, that this really seemed only one step more into the realms of hallucination.

This was an unfortunate view of the matter.

On old Christmas Eve he lighted the fires in his mausoleum first, and at last succeeded in writing a letter to Grace Carden. He got out of the difficulty in the best way, by making it very short. He put it in an envelope, and addressed it, intending to give it to Jael Dence, from whom he was always expecting a second visit.

He then lighted his forge, and soon the old walls were ringing again with the blows of his hammer.

It was ten o'clock at night; a clear frosty night; but he was heated and perspiring with his ardent work, when, all of a sudden, a cold air seemed to come in upon him from a new quarter—the door. He left his forge, and took a few steps to where he could see the door. Instead of the door, he saw the blue sky.

He uttered an exclamation, and rubbed his eyes.

It was no hallucination. The door lay flat on the ground, and the stars glittered in the horizon.

Young Little ran towards the door; but, when he got near it, he paused, and a dire misgiving quelled him. A workman soon recognizes a workman's hand; and he saw Hillsborough cunning and skill in this feat, and Hillsborough cunning and cruelty lurking in ambush at the door.

He went back to his forge, and, the truth must be told, his knees felt weak under him with fears of what was to come.

He searched about for weapons, and could find nothing to protect him against numbers. Pistols he had; but, from a wretched over-security, he had never brought them to Cairnhope Church.

Oh, it was an era of agony that minute, in which, after avoiding the ambuscade that he felt sure awaited him at the door, he had nothing on earth he could do but wait and see what was to come next.

He knew that however small his chance of escape by fighting, it was

his only one ; and he resolved to receive the attack where he was. He blew his bellows and, cold at heart, affected to forge.

Dusky forms stole into the old church.

CHAPTER XV.

LITTLE blew his coals to a white heat : then took his hammer into his left hand, and his little iron shovel, a weapon about two feet long, into his right.

Three assailants crept towards him, and his position was such that two at least could assail him front and rear. He counted on that, and measured their approach with pale cheek but glittering eye, and thrust his shovel deep into the white coals.

They crept nearer and nearer, and, at last, made an almost simultaneous rush on him back and front.

The man in his rear was a shade in advance of the other. Little, whose whole soul was in arms, had calculated on this, and, turning as they came at him, sent a shovelful of fiery coals into that nearest assailant's face, then stepped swiftly out of the way of the other, who struck at him too immediately for him to parry ; ere he could recover the wasted blow, Little's hot shovel came down on his head with tremendous force, and laid him senseless and bleeding on the earth, with blood running from his ears.

Little ladled the coals right and left on the other two assailants, one of whom was already yelling with the pain of the first shovelful ; then, vaulting suddenly over a pew, he ran for the door.

There he was encountered by Sam Cole, an accomplished cudgel-player, who parried his blows coolly, and gave him a severe rap on the head that dazzled him. But he fought on, till he heard footsteps coming behind him, and then rage and despair seized him, he drew back, shifted his hammer into his right hand and hurled it with all his force at Cole's breast, for he feared to miss his head. Had it struck him on the breast, delivered as it was, it would probably have smashed his breastbone, and killed him ; but it struck him on his throat, which was, in some degree, protected by a muffler : it struck him and sent him flying like a feather : he fell on his back in the porch, yards from where he received that prodigious blow.

Henry was bounding out after him, when he was seized from behind, and the next moment another seized him too, and his right hand was now disarmed by throwing away the hammer.

He struggled furiously with them, and twice he shook them off, and struck them with his fist, and jobbed them with his shovel quick and short, as a horse kicking.

But one was cunning enough to make a feint at his face, and then fall down and lay hold of his knees : he was about to pulverize this fellow with one blow of his shovel, when the other flung his arms round him. It became a mere struggle. Such was his fury and his vigour, however, that they could not master him. He played his head like a snake, so that they could not seize him disadvantageously ; and at last he dropped his shovel and got them both by the throat, and grasped them so fiercely that their faces were purple, and their eyes beginning to fix, when, to his dismay, he received a violent blow on the right arm that nearly broke it : he let go, with a cry of pain, and with his left hand twisted the other man round so quickly, that he received the next blow of Cole's cudgel. Then he dashed his left fist into Cole's eye, who staggered, but still barred the way ; so Little rushed upon him, and got him by the throat, and would soon have settled him : but the others recovered themselves ere he could squeeze all the wind out of Cole, and it became a struggle of three to one.

He dragged them all three about with him ; he kicked, he hit, he did everything that a man with one hand, and a lion's heart, could do.

But gradually they got the better of him ; and at last it came to this, that two were struggling on the ground with him, and Cole standing over them all three, ready to strike.

"Now, hold him so, while I settle him," cried Cole, and raised his murderous cudgel.

It came down on Little's shoulder, and only just missed his head.

Again it came down, and with terrible force.

Up to this time he had fought as mute as a fox. But now that it had come to mere butchery, he cried out, in his agony, "They'll kill me.—My mother!—Help! Murder! Help!"

"Ay ! thou'l never forge no more ! " roared Cole, and thwack came down the crushing bludgeon.

"Help! Murder! Help!" screamed the victim, more faintly ; and at the next blow more faintly still.

But again the murderous cudgel was lifted high, to descend upon his young head.

As the confederates held the now breathless and despairing victim to receive the blow, and the butcher, with one eye closed by Henry's fist, but the other gleaming savagely, raised the cudgel to finish him, Henry saw a huge tongue of flame pour out at them all, from outside the church, and a report, that sounded like a cannon, was accompanied by the vicious ping of shot. Cole screamed and yelled, and dropped his cudgel, and his face was covered with blood in a moment ; he yelled, and covered his face with his hands ; and instantly came another flash, another report, another cruel ping of shot, and this time his hands were covered with blood.

The others rolled yelling out of the line of fire, and ran up to the aisle for their lives.

Cole, yelling, tried to follow ; but Henry, though sick and weak with

the blows, caught him, and clung to his knees, and the next moment the place was filled with men carrying torches and gleaming swords, and led by a gentleman, who stood over Henry, in evening-dress, but with the haughty expanded nostrils, the brilliant black eyes, and all the features of that knight in rusty armour, who had come to him in his dream, and left him with scorn.

At this moment a crash was heard : two of the culprits, with desperate agility, had leaped on to the vestry chest, and from that on to the horse, and from him headlong out at the window.

Mr. Raby despatched all his men but one in pursuit, with this brief order,—“Take them, alive or dead,—doesn’t matter which,—they are only cutlers ; and cowards.”

His next word was to Cole. “What, three blackguards to one !—that’s how Hillsborough fights, eh ?”

“I’m not a blackguard,” said Henry, faintly.

“That remains to be proved, sir,” said Raby, grimly.

Henry made answer by fainting away.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Henry Little came to himself, he was seated on men’s hands, and being carried through the keen refreshing air. Mr. Raby was striding on in front ; the horse’s hoofs were clamping along on the hard road behind ; and he himself was surrounded by swordsmen in fantastic dresses.

He opened his eyes, and thought, of course, it was another vision. But no, the man, with whose blows his body was sore, and his right arm utterly numb, walked close to him between two sword-dancers, with Raby-marks and Little-marks upon him, viz., a face spotted with blood, and a black eye.

Little sighed.

“Eh, that’s music to me,” said a friendly voice close to him. It was the King George of the lyrical drama, and, out of poetry, George the blacksmith.

“What, it is you, is it ?” said Little.

“Ay, sir, and a joyful man to hear you speak again. The cowardly varmint ! And to think they have all got clear but this one ! Are ye sore hurt, sir ?”

“I’m in awful pain, but no bones broken.” Then, in a whisper,—“Where are you taking me, George ?”

“To Raby Hall,” was the whispered reply.

“Not for all the world ! If you are my friend, put me down, and let me slip away.”

“Don’t ask me, don’t ask me,” said George, in great distress. “How could I look Squire in the face ? He did put you in my charge.”

“Then I’m a prisoner !” said Henry, sternly.

George hung his head, but made no reply.

Henry also maintained a sullen silence after that.

The lights of Raby came in sight.

That house contained two women, who awaited the result of the nocturnal expedition with terrible anxiety.

Its fate, they both felt, had been determined before they even knew that the expedition had started.

They had nothing to do but to wait, and pray that Henry had made his escape, or else had not been so mad as to attempt resistance.

In this view of things, the number and even the arms of his assailants were some comfort to them, as rendering resistance impossible.

As for Mr. Coventry, he was secretly delighted. His conscience was relieved. Raby would now drive his rival out of the church and out of the county without the help of the Trades, and his act of treachery and bad faith would be harmless. Things had taken the happiest possible turn for him.

For all that, this courtier affected sympathy, and even some anxiety, to please Miss Carden, and divert all suspicion from himself. But the true ring was wanting to his words, and both the women felt them jar, and got away from him, and laid their heads together, in agitated whispers. And the result was, they put shawls over their heads, and went together out into the night.

They ran up the road, sighing and clasping their hands, but no longer speaking.

At the first turn they saw the whole body coming towards them.

"I'll soon know," said Jael, struggling with her agitation. "Don't you be seen, Miss; that might anger the Squire; and, oh, he will be a wrathful man this night, if he caught him working in yonder church."

Grace then slipped back, and Jael ran on. But no sooner did she come up with the party, than Raby ordered her back, in a tone she dared not resist.

She ran back, and told Grace they were carrying him in, hurt, and the Squire's eyes were like hot coals.

Grace slipped into the drawing-room, and kept the door ajar. Soon afterwards, Raby, his men, and his prisoners, entered the hall, and Grace heard Raby say, "Bring the prisoners into the dining-room."

Grace Carden sat down, and leaned her head upon her hand, and her little foot beat the ground, all in a flutter.

But this ended in a spirited resolve. She rose, pale, but firm, and said, "Come with me, Jael;" and she walked straight into the dining-room. Coventry strolled in after her.

The room was still brilliantly lighted. Mr. Raby was seated at his writing-table at the far end, and the prisoners, well guarded, stood ready to be examined.

" You can't come in here," was Mr. Raby's first word to Grace.

But she was prepared for this, and stood her ground. " Excuse me, dear uncle, but I wish to see you administer justice ; and, besides, I believe I can tell you something about one of the prisoners."

" Indeed ! that alters the case. Somebody give Miss Carden a chair."

She sat down, and fixed her eyes upon Henry Little,—eyes that said plainly, " I shall defend you, if necessary :" his pale cheek was flushing at sight of her.

Mr. Raby arranged his papers to make notes, and turned to Cole. " The charge against you is, that you were seen this night by several persons engaged in an assault of a cruel and aggravated character. You, and two other men, attacked and overpowered an individual here present ; and, while he was helpless, and on the ground, you were seen to raise a heavy cudgel—(Got the cudgel, George ?)"

" Ay, your worship, here 'tis."

" —And to strike him several times on the head and limbs, with all your force."

" Oh, cruel ! cruel ! "

" This won't do, Miss Carden ; no observations, please. In consequence of which blows he soon after swooned away, and was for some time unconscious, and ——"

" Oh ! "

" — For aught I know, may have received some permanent injury."

" Not he," said Cole ; " he's all right. I'm the only man that is hurt ; and I've got it hot ; he hit me with his hammer, and knocked me down like a bullock. He's given me this black eye too."

" In self-defence, apparently. Which party attacked the other first ?"

" Why they attacked me, of course," said Henry. " Four of them."

" Four ! I saw but three."

" Oh, I settled one at starting, up near the forge. Didn't you find him ? " (This to George.)

" Nay, we found none of the trash but this," indicating Cole, with a contemptuous jerk of the thumb.

" Now, don't all speak at once," said Mr. Raby. " My advice to *you* is to say nothing, or you'll probably make bad worse. But if you choose to say anything, I'm bound to hear it."

" Well, sir," said Cole, in a carneying voice, " what I say is this : what need we go to law over this ? If you go against me for hitting him with a stick, after he had hit me with a blacksmith's hammer, I shall have to go against you for shooting me with a gun."

" That is between you and me, sir. You will find a bystander may shoot a malefactor to save the life of a citizen. Confine your defence, at present, to the point at issue. Have you any excuse, as against this young man ? " (To Henry.)—" You look pale. You can sit down till your turn comes."

" Not in this house.

"And why not in this house, pray? Is your own house a better?"

No answer from Henry. A look of amazement and alarm from Grace. But she was afraid to utter a word, after the admonition she had received.

"Well, sir," said Cole, "he was desecrating a church."

"So he was, and I shall talk to him in his turn. But you desecrated it worse. He turned it into a blacksmith's shop; you turned it into a shambles. I shall commit you. You will be taken to Hillsborough tomorrow; to-night you will remain in my strong-room. Fling him down a mattress and some blankets, and give him plenty to eat and drink; I wouldn't starve the devil on old Christmas Eve. There, take him away. Stop; search his pockets before you leave him alone."

Cole was taken away, and Henry's turn came.

Just before this examination commenced, Grace clasped her hands, and cast a deprecating look on Henry, as much as to say, "Be moderate." And then her eyes roved to and fro, and the whole woman was in arms, and on the watch.

Mr. Raby began on him. "As for you, your offence is not so criminal in the eye of the law: but it is bad enough; you have broken into a church by unlawful means; you have turned it into a smithy, defiled the graves of the dead, and turned the tomb of a good knight into an oven, to the scandal of men and the dishonour of God. Have you any excuse to offer?"

"Plenty. I was plying an honest trade, in a country where freedom is the law. The Hillsborough Unions combined against me, and restrained my freedom, and threatened my life, ay, and attempted my life too, before to-day: and so the injustice and cruelty of men drove me to a sanctuary, me and my livelihood. Blame the Trades, blame the public laws, blame the useless police: but you can't blame me; a man must live."

"Why not set up your shop in the village? Why wantonly desecrate a church?"

"The church was more secret, and more safe: and nobody worships in it. The wind and the weather are allowed to destroy it; you care so little for it you let it moulder; then why howl if a fellow uses it and keeps it warm?"

At this sally there was a broad rustic laugh, which, however, Mr. Raby quelled with one glance of his eye.

"Come, don't be impertinent," said he to Little.

"Then don't you provoke a fellow," cried Henry, raising his voice.

Grace clasped her hands in dismay.

Jael Dence said, in her gravest and most mellow voice, "You do forget the good Squire saved your life this very night."

This was like oil on all the waters.

"Well, certainly I oughtn't to forget that," said Henry, apologetically. Then he appealed piteously to Jael, whose power over him struck everybody directly, including Grace Carden. "Look here, you mustn't think,

because I don't keep howling, I'm all right. My arm is disabled : my back is almost broken : my thigh is cut. I'm in sharp pain, all this time : and that makes a fellow impatient of being lectured on the back of it all. Why doesn't he let me go ? I don't want to affront him now. All I want is to go and get nursed a bit somewhere."

"Now that is the first word of reason and common sense you have uttered, young man. It decides me not to detain you. All I shall do, under the circumstances, is to clear your rubbish out of that holy building, and watch it by night as well as day. Your property, however, shall be collected, and delivered to you uninjured : so oblige me with your name and address."

Henry made no reply.

Raby turned his eye full upon him.

"Surely you do not object to tell me your name."

"I do."

"Why?"

"Excuse me."

"What are you afraid of? Do you doubt my word, when I tell you I shall not proceed against you?"

"No : it is not that at all. But this is no place for me to utter my father's name. We all have our secrets, sir. You have got yours. There's a picture, with its face to the wall. Suppose I was to ask you to tell all the world whose face it is you insult and hide from the world?"

Raby turned red with wrath and surprise, at this sudden thrust. "You insolent young scoundrel!" he cried. "What is that to you, and what connection can there be between that portrait and a man in your way of life?"

"There's a close connection," said Henry, trembling with anger, in his turn : "and the proof is that, when that picture is turned to the light, I'll tell you my name : and, till that picture is turned to the light, I'll not tell you my name ; and if anybody here knows my name, and tells it you, may that person's tongue be blistered at the root!"

"Oh, how fearful!" cried Grace, turning very pale. "But I'll put an end to it all. I've got the key, and I've his permission, and I'll—oh, Mr. Raby, there's something more in this than we know." She darted to the picture, and unlocked the padlock, and, with Jael's assistance, began to turn the picture. Then Mr. Raby rose and seemed to bend his mind inwards, but he neither forbade, nor encouraged, this impulsive act of Grace Carden's.

Now there was not a man, nor a woman, in the room, whose curiosity had not been more or less excited about this picture ; so there was a general movement towards it, of all but Mr. Raby, who stood quite still, turning his eye inwards, and evidently much moved, though passive.

There happened to be a strong light upon the picture, and the lovely olive face, the vivid features, and glorious black eyes and eyebrows, seemed to flash out of the canvas into life.

Even the living faces, being blondes, paled before it, in the one particular of colour. They seemed fair glittering moons, and this a glowing sun.

Grace's first feelings were those of simple surprise and admiration. But, as she gazed, Henry's words returned to her, and all manner of ideas struck her pell-mell. "Oh, beautiful! beautiful!" she cried. Then, turning to Henry, "You are right; it was not a face to hide from the world—oh! the likeness! just look at *him*, and then at *her*! can I be mistaken?"

This appeal was made to the company, and roused curiosity to a high pitch; every eye began to compare the dark-skinned beauty on the wall with the swarthy young man, who now stood there, and submitted in haughty silence to the comparison.

The words caught Mr. Raby's attention. He made a start, and elbowing them all out of his way, strode up to the picture.

"What do you say, Miss Carden? What likeness can there be between my sister and a smith?" and he turned and frowned haughtily on Henry Little.

Henry returned his look of defiance directly.

But that very exchange of defiance brought out another likeness, which Grace's quick eye seized directly.

"Why, he is still like you," she cried. "Look, good people! Look at all three. Look at their great black eyes, and their brown hair. Look at their dark skins, and their haughty noses. Oh, you needn't blow your nostrils out at me, gentlemen; I am not a bit afraid of either of you.—And then look at this lovely creature. She is a Raby too, only softened down by her sweet womanliness. Look at them all three. If they are not one flesh and blood, I have no eyes."

"Oh yes, Miss; and this lady is his mother. For I have *seen* her; and she is a sweet lady; and she told me I had a Cairnhope face, and kissed me for it."

Upon this from Jael, the general conviction rose into a hum that buzzed round the room.

Mr. Raby was struck with amazement. At last he turned slowly upon Henry, and said, with stiff politeness, "Is your name Little, sir?"

"Little is my name, and I'm proud of it."

"Your name may be Little, but your face is Raby. All the better for you, sir."

He then turned his back to the young man, and walked right in front of the picture, and looked at it steadily and sadly.

It was a simple and natural action, yet somehow done in so imposing a way, that the bystanders held their breath, to see what would follow.

He gazed long and steadily on the picture, and his features worked visibly.

"Ay!" he said. "Nature makes no such faces now-a-days. Poor unfortunate girl!" And his voice faltered a moment.

He then began to utter, in a low grave voice, some things that took everybody by surprise, by the manner as well as the matter; for, with his never once taking his eyes off the picture, and speaking in a voice softened by the sudden presence of that womanly beauty, the companion of his youth, it was just like a man speaking softly in a dream.

"Thomas, this picture will remain as it is while I live."

"Yes, sir."

"I find I can bear the sight of you. As we get older we get tougher. You look as if you didn't want me to quarrel with your son? Well, I will not: there has been quarrelling enough. Any of the loyal Dences here?" But he never even turned his head from the picture to look for them.

"Only me, sir; Jael Dence, at your service. Father's not very well."

"Nathan, or Jael, it is all one, so that it is Dence. You'll take that young gentleman home with you, and send him to bed. He'll want nursing: for he got some ugly blows, and took them like a gentleman. The young gentleman has a fancy for forging things—the Lord knows what. He shall not forge things in a church, and defile the tombs of his own forefathers; but" (with a groan) "he can forge in your yard. All the snobs in Hillsborough shan't hinder him, if that is his cursed hobby. Gentlemen are not to be dictated to by snobs. Arm three men every night with guns; load the guns with ball, not small shot, as I did; and, if those ruffians molest him again, kill them, and then come to me and complain of them. But, mind you, kill them first—complain afterwards. And now take half-a-dozen of these men with you, to carry him to the farm, if he needs it. THERE, EDITH!"

And still he never moved his eyes from the picture, and the words seemed to drop out of him.

Henry stood bewildered, and, ere he could say anything that might revive the dormant irritation of Mr. Raby against him, female tact interposed. Grace clasped her hands to him, with tears in her eyes; and as for Jael Dence, she assumed the authority with which she had been invested, and hurried him bodily away; and the sword-dancers all gathered round him, and they carried him in triumphant procession, with the fiddler playing, and George whistling, the favourite tune of "Raby come home again," while every sturdy foot beat the hard and ringing road in admirable keeping with that spirit-stirring march.

When he was gone, Grace crept up to Mr. Raby, who still stood before the picture, and eyed it, and thought of his youth. She took his arm wondrous softly with her two hands, rested her sweet head against his shoulder, and gazed at it along with him.

When she had nestled to him some time in this delicate attitude, she turned her eyes up to him, and murmured, "How good, how noble you are: and how I love you." Then, all in a moment, she curled round his neck, and kissed him with a tender violence, that took him quite by surprise.

As for Mr. Coventry, he had been reduced to a nullity, and escaped attention all this time : he sat in gloomy silence, and watched with chilled and foreboding heart the strange turn events had taken, and were taking ; events which he, and no other man, had set rolling.

CHAPTER XVII.

FREDERICK COVENTRY, being still unacquainted with the contents of Grace's letter, was now almost desperate. Grace Carden, inaccessible to an unknown workman, would she be inaccessible to a workman, whom Mr. Raby, proud as he was, had publicly recognized as his nephew ? This was not to be expected. But something was to be expected, viz., that in a few days the door would be closed with scorn in the face of Frederick Coventry, the miserable traitor, who had broken his solemn pledge, and betrayed his benefactor to those who had all but assassinated him. Little would be sure to suspect him, and the prisoner, when he came to be examined, would furnish some clue.

A cold perspiration bedewed his very back, when he recollect ed that the chief constable would be present at Cole's examination, and supply the link, even if there should be one missing. He had serious thoughts of leaving the country at once.

Finding himself unobserved, he walked out of the room, and paced up and down the hall.

His thoughts now took a practical form. He must bribe the prisoner to hold his tongue.

But how ? and when ? and where ?

After to-night there might be no opportunity of saying a word to him.

While he was debating this in his mind, Knight the butler crossed the hall.

Coventry stopped him, and asked where the prisoner was.

"Where Squire told us to put him, sir."

"No chance of his escaping—I hope ?"

"Not he, sir."

"I should like to take a look at him."

Knight demurred. "Well, sir, you see the orders are—but, of course, Master won't mind you. I'll speak to him."

"No, it is not worth while. I am only anxious the villain should be secure." This of course was a feeler.

"Oh, there's no fear of that. Why, he is in the strong room. It's right above yours. If you'll come with me, sir, I'll show you the door." Coventry accompanied him, and Thomas Knight showed him a strong door, with two enormous bolts outside, both shot.

Coventry felt despair, and affected satisfaction.

Then, after a pause, he said, "But is the window equally secure ?"

"Two iron bars, almost as thick as these bolts : and, if it stood open,

what could he do but break his neck, and cheat the gallows ? He is all right, sir ; never you fear. We searched him, from head to foot, and found no eend o' tools in his pockets. He is a deep 'un. But we are Yorkshire too, as the saying is. He goes to Hillsbro' town-hall to-morrow ; and glad to be shut on him."

Coventry complimented him, and agreed with him that escape was impossible.

He then got a light, and went to his own bed-room, and sat down, cold at heart, before the fire.

He sat in that state, till two o'clock in the morning, distracting his brain with schemes, that were invented only to be dismissed as idle.

At last an idea came to him. He took his fishing-rod, and put the thinner joints together, and laid them on the bed. He then opened his window very cautiously. But, as that made some noise, he remained quite quiet for full ten minutes. Then he got upon the window-seat, and passed the fishing-rod out. After one or two attempts, he struck the window above, with the fine end.

Instantly he heard a movement above, and a window cautiously opened.

He gave a low "Hem !"

"Who's that ?" whispered the prisoner, from above.

"A man who wants you to escape."

"Nay ; but I have no tools."

"What do you require ?"

"I think I could do summut with a screw-driver."

"I'll send you one up."

The next minute a couple of small screw-drivers were passed up—part of the furniture of his gun.

Cole worked hard, but silently, for about an hour, and then he whispered down that he should be able to get a bar out. But how high was it from the ground ?

"About forty feet."

Coventry heard the man actually groan at the intelligence.

"Let yourself down on my window-sill. I can find you rope enough for that."

"What, d'ye take me for a bird, that can light of a gate ?"

"But the sill is solid stone, and full a foot wide."

"Say ye so, lad ? Then luck is o' my side. Send up rope."

The rope was sent up, and presently was fast to something above, and dangled down a little past the window-sill.

"Put out a light on sill," whispered the voice above.

"I will."

Then there was a long silence, during which Coventry's blood ran cold.

As nothing further occurred, he whispered, "What is the matter ?"

"My stomach fails me. Send me up a drop brandy, will ye ? Eh, man, but this is queer work."

"I can't get it up to you; you must drink it here. Come,—think! It will be five years' penal servitude if you don't."

"Is the rope long enough?"

"Plenty for that."

Then there was another awful silence.

By-and-by a man's legs came dangling down, and Cole landed on the sill, still holding tight by the rope. He swung down on the sill, and slid into the room, perspiring and white with fear.

Coventry gave him some brandy directly,—Cole's trembling hand sent it flying down his throat, and the two men stared at each other.

"Why, it is a gentleman!"

"Yes."

"And do you really mean to see me clear?"

"Drink a little more brandy, and recover yourself, and then I'll tell you."

When the man was fortified and ready for fresh exertions, Coventry told him he must try and slip out of the house at the front door: he would lend him a feather and some oil to apply to the bolts if necessary.

When the plan of operation was settled, Coventry asked him how long it would take him to get to Hillsborough.

"I can run it in two hours."

"Then if I give the alarm in an hour and a half, it won't hurt."

"Give me that start and you may send bloodhounds on my heels, they'll never catch me."

"Now take off your shoes."

While he was taking them off, Cole eyed his unexpected friend very keenly, and took stock of all his features.

When he was ready, Coventry opened his door very carefully, and placed a light so as to be of some use to the fugitive. Cole descended the stairs like a cat, and soon found the heavy bolts and drew them; then slipped out into the night, and away, with fleet foot and wondering heart, to Hillsborough.

Coventry put out his light and slipped into bed.

About four o'clock in the morning the whole house was alarmed with loud cries, followed by two pistol-shots: and all those who ran out of their bed-rooms at all promptly, found Coventry in his nightgown and trousers, with a smoking pistol in his hand, which he said he had discharged at a robber. The account he gave was, that he had been suddenly awokened by hearing his door shut, and had found his window open; had slipped on his trousers, got to his pistols, and run out just in time to see a man opening the great front door: had fired twice at him, and thought he must have hit him the second time.

On examining the window the rope was found dangling.

Instantly there was a rush to the strong room.

The bird was flown.

"Ah!" said Coventry. "I felt there ought to be some one with him, but I didn't like to interfere."

George the groom and another were mounted on swift horses, and took the road to Hillsborough.

But Cole, with his start of a hundred minutes, was safe in a back slum before they got half way.

What puzzled the servants most was how Cole could have unscrewed the bar, and where he could have obtained the cord. And while they were twisting this matter every way, in hot discussion, Coventry quaked, for he feared his little gunscrews would be discovered. But no, they were not in the room.

It was a great mystery; but Raby said they ought to have searched the man's body as well as his pockets.

He locked the cord up, however, and remarked it was a new one, and had probably been bought in Hillsborough. He would try and learn where.

At breakfast-time a bullet was found in the door. Coventry apologized.

"Your mistake was missing the man, not hitting the door," said Raby. "One comfort, I tickled the fellow with small shot. It shall be slug next time. All we can do now is to lay the matter before the police. I must go into Hillsborough, I suppose."

He went into Hillsborough accordingly, and told the chief constable the whole story, and deposited the piece of cord with him. He found that zealous officer already acquainted with the outline of the business, and on his mettle to discover the authors and agents of the outrage, if possible. And it occurred to his sagacity that there was at this moment a workman in Hillsborough, who must know many secrets of the Trades, and had now nothing to gain by concealing them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THUS the attempt to do Little was more successful than it looks. Its object was to keep Little and Simmons apart, and sure enough those two men never met again in life.

But, on the other hand, this new crime embittered two able men against the Union, and put Grotait in immediate peril. Mr. Ransome conferred with Mr. Holdfast, and they both visited Simmons, and urged him to make a clean breast before he left the world.

Simmons hesitated. He said repeatedly, "Gi' me time! gi' me time!"

Grotait heard of these visits, and was greatly alarmed. He set Dan Tucker and another to watch by turns and report.

Messrs. Holdfast and Ransome had an ally inside the house. Eliza Watney had come in from another town, and had no Hillsborough prejudices. She was furious at this new outrage on Little, who had won her regard,

and she hoped her brother-in-law would reveal all he knew. Such a confession, she thought, might remove the stigma from himself to those better-educated persons, who had made a tool of her poor ignorant relative.

Accordingly, no sooner did the nurse Little had provided inform her, in a low voice, that there was *a change*, than she put on her bonnet, and went in all haste to Mr. Holdfast, and also to the chief constable, as she had promised them to do.

But of course she could not go without talking. She met an acquaintance not far from the door, and told her Ned was near his end, and she was going to tell the gentlemen.

Dan Tucker stepped up to this woman, and she was as open-mouthed to him as Eliza had been to her. Dan went directly with the news to Grotait.

Grotait came all in a hurry, but Holdfast was there before him, and was actually exhorting Simmons to do a good action in his last moments, and reveal those greater culprits who had employed him, when Grotait, ill at ease, walked in, sat down at the foot of the bed, and fixed his eye on Simmons.

Simmons caught sight of him and stared, but said nothing to him. Yet, when Holdfast had done, Simmons was observed to look at Grotait, though he replied to the other. "If you was a Hillsbro' man, you'd know we tell on dead folk, but not on quick. I told on Ned Simmons, because he was as good as dead; but to tell on Trade, that's different."

"And I think, my poor fellow," suggested Grotait, smoothly, "you might spend your last moments better in telling us what you would wish the Trade to do for your wife, and the child, if it lives."

"Well, I think ye might make the old gal an allowance till she marries again."

"Oh, Ned, Ned!" cried the poor woman. "I'll have no man after thee." And a violent burst of grief followed.

"Thou'll do like the rest," said the dying man. "Hold thy bellinger, and let me speak, that's got no time to lose. How much will ye allow her, old lad?"

"Six shillings a week, Ned."

"And what is to come of young 'un?"

"We'll apprentice him."

"To my trade?"

"You know better than that, Ned. You are a freeman; but he won't be a freeman's son by our law, thou know'st. But there's plenty of outside trades in Hillsbro'. We'll bind him to one of those, and keep an eye on him, for thy sake."

"Well, I must take what I can get."

"And little enough too," said Eliza Watney. "Now do you know that they have set upon Mr. Little, and beaten him within an inch of his life? Oh, Ned, you can't approve that, and him our best friend."

"Who says I approve it, thou fool?"

"Then tell the gentleman who the villain was; for I believe you know."

"I'll tell 'em summut about it."

Grotait turned pale; but still kept his glittering eye fixed on the sick man.

"The job was offered to me; but I wouldn't be in it. I know that much. Says I, 'He has had his squeak.'"

"Who offered you the job?" asked Mr. Holdfast. And at this moment Ransome came in.

"What, another black coat!" said Simmons. "—, if you are not like so many crows over a dead horse." He then began to wander, and Holdfast's question remained unanswered.

This aberration continued so long, and accompanied with such interruptions of the breathing, that both Holdfast and Ransome despaired of ever hearing another rational word from the man's lips.

They lingered on however, and still Grotait sat at the foot of the bed, with his glittering eye fixed on the dying man.

Presently Simmons became silent, and reflected.

"Who offered me the job to do Little?" said he, in a clear rational voice.

"Yes," said Mr. Holdfast. "And who paid you to blow up the forge?"

Simmons made no reply. His fast fleeting powers appeared unable now to hold an idea for above a second or two.

Yet, after another short interval, he seemed to go back a second time to the subject as intelligibly as ever.

"Master Editor!" said he, with a sort of start.

"Yes." And Holdfast stepped close to his bedside.

"Can you keep a secret?"

Grotait started up,

"Yes!" said Holdfast, eagerly.

"THEN SO CAN I."

These were the last words of Ned Simmons. He died, false to himself, but true to his fellows, and faithful to a terrible confederacy, which, in England and the nineteenth century, was Venice and the middle ages over again.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. COVENTRY, relieved of a great and immediate anxiety, could now turn his whole attention to Grace Carden; and she puzzled him. He expected to see her come down beaming with satisfaction at the great event of last night. Instead of that, she appeared late, with cheeks rather pale, and signs of trouble under her fair eyes.

As the day wore on, she showed positive distress of mind ; irritable and dejected by turns, and quite unable to settle to anything.

Mr. Coventry, with all his skill, was quite at fault. He could understand her being in anxiety for news about Little ; but why not relieve her anxiety by sending a servant to inquire ? Above all, why this irritation ? this positive suffering ?

A mystery to him, there is no reason why it should be one to my readers. Grace Carden, for the first time in her life, was in the clutches of a fiend, a torturing fiend, called jealousy.

The thought that another woman was nursing Henry Little all this time distracted her. It would have been such heaven to her to tend him, after those cruel men had hurt him so ; but that pure joy was given to another, and that other loved him, and could now indulge and show her love. Show it ? Why, she had herself opened his eyes to Jael's love, and advised him to reward it,

And now she could do nothing to defend herself. The very improvement in Henry's circumstances held her back. She could not write to him and say, " Now I know you are Mr. Raby's nephew, that makes all the difference." That would only give him fresh offence, and misrepresent herself; for in truth she had repented her letter long before the relationship was discovered.

No ; all she could do was to wait till Jael Dence came up, and then charge her with some subtle message, that might make Henry Little pause if he still loved her.

She detected Coventry watching her. She fled directly to her own room, and there sat on thorns, waiting for her rival to come and give her an opportunity.

But afternoon came, and no Jael ; evening came, and no Jael.

" Ah ! " thought Grace, bitterly, " she is better employed than to come near me. She is not a self-sacrificing fool like me. When I had the advantage, I gave it up ; now she has got it, she uses it without mercy, decency, or gratitude. And that is the way to love. Oh ! if my turn could but come again ! But it never will."

Having arrived at this conclusion, she lay on the couch in her own room, and was thoroughly miserable.

She came down to dinner, and managed to take a share in the conversation, but was very languid ; and Coventry detected that she had been crying.

After dinner, Knight brought in a verbal message from Jael to Mr. Raby, to the effect that the young gentleman was stiff and sore, and she had sent into Hillsborough for Doctor Amboyne.

" Quite right of her," said the Squire. " You needn't look so alarmed, Grace ; there are no bones broken : and he is in capital hands : he couldn't have a tenderer nurse than that great strapping lass, nor a better doctor than my friend and maniac Amboyne."

Next morning, soon after breakfast, Raby addressed his guests as fol-

lows :—" I was obliged to go into Hillsborough yesterday, and postpone the purification of that sacred building. But I set a watch on it ; and this day I devote to a pious purpose ; I'm going to un-Little the church of my forefathers ; and you can come with me, if you choose." This invitation, however, was given in a tone so gloomy, and so little cordial, that Coventry, courtier-like, said in reply, he felt it would be a painful sight to his host, and the fewer witnesses the better. Raby nodded assent, and seemed pleased. Not so Miss Carden. She said : " If that is your feeling, you had better stay at home. I shall go. I have something to tell Mr. Raby when we get there ; and I'm vain enough to think it will make him not quite so angry about the poor dear old church."

" Then come, by all means," said Raby ; " for I'm angry enough at present."

Before they got half way to the church, they were hailed from behind ; and, turning round, saw the burly figure of Dr. Amboyne coming after them.

They waited for him, and he came up with them. He had heard the whole business from Little, and was warm in the praises of his patient.

To a dry inquiry from Raby, whether he approved of his patient desecrating a church, he said, with delicious coolness, he thought there was not much harm in that, the church not being used for divine service.

At this, Raby uttered an inarticulate but savage growl ; and Grace, to avert a hot discussion, begged the Doctor not to go into that question, but to tell her how Mr. Little was.

" Oh, he has received some severe contusions, but there is nothing serious. He is in good hands, I assure you. I met him out walking with his nurse ; and I must say I never saw a handsomer couple. He is dark ; she is fair. She is like the ancient statues of Venus, massive and grand, but not clumsy ; he is lean and sinewy, as a man ought to be."

" Oh, Doctor, this from you ? " said Grace, with undisguised spite.

" Well, it *was* a concession. He was leaning on her shoulder, and her face and downcast eyes were turned towards him so sweetly—said I to myself—Hum ! "

" What ! " said Raby. " Would you marry him to a farmer's daughter ? "

" No ; I'd let him marry who he likes : only, having seen him and his nurse together, it struck me that, between two such fine creatures of the same age, the tender relation of patient and nurse, sanctioned, as I hear it is, by a benevolent uncle—"

" Confound your impudence ! "

" —Would hardly stop there. What do you think, Miss Carden ? "

" I'll tell you, if you will promise, on your honour, never to repeat what I say." And she slackened her pace, and lingered behind Mr. Raby.

He promised her.

" Then," she whispered in his ear, " I HATE you ! "

And her eyes flashed blue fire at him, and startled him.

Then she darted forward, and took Mr. Raby's arm, with a scarlet face, and a piteous deprecating glance shot back at the sagacious personage she had defied.

Dr. Amboyne proceeded instantly to put himself in this young lady's place, and so divine what was the matter. The familiar process soon brought a knowing smile to his sly lip.

They entered the church, and went straight to the forge.

Raby stood with folded arms, and contemplated the various acts of sacrilege with a silent distress that was really touching.

Amboyne took more interest in the traces of the combat. "Ah!" said he, "this is where he threw the hot coals in their faces—he has told me all about it. And look at this pool of blood on the floor! Here he felled one of them with his shovel. What is this?—traces of blood leading up to this chest!"

He opened the chest, and found plain proofs inside that the wounded man had hid himself in it for some time. He pointed this out to Raby; and gave it as his opinion that the man's confederates had come back for him, and carried him away. "These fellows are very true to one another. I have often admired them for that."

Raby examined the blood-stained interior of the chest, and could not help agreeing with the sagacious doctor.

"Yes," said he, sadly; "if we had been sharp, we might have caught the blackguard. But I was in a hurry to leave the scene of sacrilege. Look here; the tomb of a good knight defiled into an oven, and the pews mutilated—and all for the base uses of trade." And in this strain he continued for a long time so eloquently that, at last, he roused Grace Carden's ire.

"Mr. Raby," said she, firmly, "please add to those base uses one more. One dismal night, two poor creatures, a man and a woman, lost their way in the snow; and, after many a hard struggle, the cold and the snow overpowered them, and death was upon them. But, just at her last gasp, the girl saw a light, and heard the tinkling of a hammer. She tottered towards it; and it was a church. She just managed to strike the door with her benumbed hands, and then fell insensible. When she came to herself, gentle hands had laid her before two glorious fires in that cold tomb there. Then the same gentle hands gave her food and wine, and words of comfort, and did everything for her that brave men do for poor weak suffering women. Yes, sir, it was my life he saved, and Mr. Coventry's too; and I can't bear to hear a word against him, especially while I stand looking at his poor forge, and his grates, that you abuse; but I adore them, and bless them; and so would you, if they had saved your life, as they did mine. You don't love me one bit: and it is very cruel."

Raby stood astonished and silent. At last he said, in a very altered tone, quite mild and deprecating, "Why did you not tell me this before?"

"Because he made us promise not. Would you have had me betray my benefactor?"

"No. You are a brave girl, an honest girl. I love you more than a bit, and, for your sake, I forgive him the whole thing. I will never call it sacrilege again, since its effect was to save an angel's life. Come, now, you have shown a proper spirit, and stood up for the absent, and brought me to submission by your impetuosity, so don't spoil it all by crying."

"No, I won't," said Grace, with a gulp. But her tears would not cease all in a moment. She had evoked that tender scene, in which words and tears of true and passionate love had rained upon her. They were an era in her life; had swept for ever out of her heart all the puny voices that had prattled what they called love to her; and that divine music, should she ever hear it again? She had resigned it, had bade it shine upon another. For this, in reality, her tears were trickling.

Mr. Raby took a much lighter view of it, and, to divert attention from her, he said, "Hallo! why this inscription has become legible. It used to be only legible in parts. Is that his doing?"

"Not a doubt of it," said Amboyne. "Set that against his sacrilege."

"Miss Carden and I are both agreed it was not sacrilege. What is nere in this pew? A brass! Why this is the brass we could none of us decipher. Hang me, if he has not read it, and restored it!"

"So he has. And where's the wonder? We live in a glorious age" (Raby smiled) "that has read the written mountains of the East, and the Abyssinian monuments: and he is a man of the age, and your mediæval brasses are no more to him than cuneiform letters to Rawlinson. Let me read this resuscitated record. 'Edith Little, daughter of Robert Raby, by Leah Dence his wife: why here's a hodge-podge! What! have the noble Rabys intermarried with the humble Dences?'

"So it seems. A younger son."

"And a Raby, daughter of Dence, married a Little three hundred years ago?"

"So it seems."

"Then what a pity this brass was not deciphered thirty years ago. But never mind that. All I demand is tardy justice to my protégé. Is not this a remarkable man? By day he carves wood, and carries out a philanthropic scheme (which I mean to communicate to you this very day, together with this young man's report); at night he forges tools that all Hillsborough can't rival; in an interval of his work he saves a valuable life or two; in another odd moment he fights like a lion, one to four; even in his moments of downright leisure, when he is neither saving life nor taking it, he practises honourable arts, restores the fading letters of a charitable bequest, and deciphers brasses, and vastly improves his uncle's genealogical knowledge, who, nevertheless, passed for an authority, till my Crichton stepped upon the scene."

Raby bore all this admirably. "You may add," said he, "that he

nevertheless finds time to correspond with his friends. Here is a letter, addressed to Miss Carden, I declare!"

"A letter to me!" said Grace, faintly.

Raby handed it over the pew to her, and turned the address, so that she could judge for herself.

She took it very slowly and feebly, and her colour came and went.

"You seem surprised; and so am I. It must have been written two days ago."

"Yes."

"Why, what on earth could he have to say to you?"

"I suppose it is the reply to mine," stammered Grace.

Mr. Raby looked amazement, and something more. Grace faltered out an explanation. "When he had saved my life, I was so grateful I wanted to make him a return. I believed Jael Dence and he—I have so high an opinion of her—I ventured to give him a hint that he might find happiness there."

Raby bit his lip. "A most singular interference on the part of a young lady," said he, stiffly. "You are right, Doctor; this age resembles no other. I suppose you meant it kindly; but I am very sorry you felt called upon, at your age, to put any such idea into the young man's head."

"So am I," said poor Grace. "Oh, pray forgive me. I am so unhappy." And she hid her face in her hands.

"Of course I forgive you," said Raby. "But, unfortunately, I knew nothing of all this, and went and put him under her charge; and here he has found a precedent for marrying a Dence—found it on this confounded brass! Well, no matter. Life is one long disappointment. What does he say? Where is the letter gone to? It has vanished."

"I have got it safe," said Grace, deprecatingly.

"Then please let me know what he says."

"What, read his letter to you?"

"Why not, pray? I'm his uncle. He is my heir-at-law. I agree with Amboyne, he has some fine qualities. It is foolish of me, no doubt, but I am very anxious to know what he says about marrying my tenant's daughter." Then, with amazing dignity, "Can I be mistaken in thinking I have a right to know who my nephew intends to marry?" And he began to get very red.

Grace hung her head, and, trembling a little, drew the letter very slowly out of her bosom.

It just flashed through her mind how cruel it was to make her read out the death-warrant of her heart before two men; but she summoned all a woman's fortitude and self-defence, prepared to hide her anguish under a marble demeanour, and quietly opened the letter.

The Change in the Cabinet:

AN EPISODE UNDER THE SECOND EMPIRE.

I.

If ever there was a man who held tight to his seat in the Cabinet and clung fast to the seals with which Providence and the Emperor had intrusted him, that man was assuredly M. Bousse. Never was seen such a statesman. Ordinary Ministers, when they commit blunders, come to grief in consequence, but not so M. Bousse. During the twenty years or more that he remained in power—and power was no vain word with M. Bousse—he did nothing else but commit blunders from one end of the year to the other. Nevertheless he prospered, and continued to wax each year more influent; whilst his blunders, far from affecting his security, seemed to serve him as so many helpful tacks which nailed him all the more closely by the skirts of his embroidered coat to his seat in the Cabinet aforesaid.

It was he who planned that famous Timbuctoo expedition which cost us nearly a billion francs, and resulted in our discomfiture. The idea of M. Bousse was, in the first place, to compel all the inhabitants of Timbuctoo to wear straps and red trousers; and in the second, to force the Timbuctookian government to buy of ours for a round sum in gold two hundred and fifteen thousand discarded bearskins. In vain was it argued by the king of the country that red trousers and bearskins, albeit well suited to the climate of France, were not the things for Timbuctoo. Our ambassador—who was the mouthpiece of M. Bousse—declined to accept such a pretext; so that the king, rendered indignant at last by so much obstinacy, ordered him to be fricasseed, which was done on the spot. We in France—I mean the public—were greatly wroth that our ambassador should have been fricasseed; but M. Bousse bore it all with much composure. The taxes were doubled that year to pay for the expedition which had become necessary, and thirty-seven journalists were sent to prison for saying they wished we had let the King of Timbuctoo alone. After three years of fighting, we had so far avenged our national honour that we had lost forty thousand men, and been driven out of the country. The public cursed and grumbled; but M. Bousse declared that the Timbuctoo expedition was one of the most glorious in history, and he found plenty of people to agree with him; not because he was right, but because he was M. Bousse, and a Cabinet Minister.

Mysterious things were whispered in the cafés, and on the Boulevards, about the amazing power of M. Bousse; people said he could turn

the Emperor round with his little finger. When he appeared in public, men took note of his countenance as of a barometer. If he looked cheerful there was a rise of fifty centimes on the three per cents ; if he was gloomy the funds went down like quicksilver. One day, when he had the toothache, there was a panic at the Bourse, and the rumour went forth that the Russian and Prussian ambassadors had both asked for their passports.

To say that we—the public again—hated M. Bousse would not be the word ; we were all his abject bondsmen. If we had every one of us had a chain riveted to our legs, and if M. Bousse, holding the ends of all these chains in one hand and a dog-whip in the other, had made us all dance to tune, we could not have been more completely his obedient servants than we were during the time he held office. This does not mean that we never howled ; on the contrary, we were always howling. Some of us howled dismally, others fiercely and hideously ; but as, notwithstanding our howls, we paid our taxes with unvarying regularity, it mattered very little to M. Bousse what we said or what we thought about him. The fact is, this excellent statesman had very strait notions respecting the art of government. When people howled he never troubled himself about collateral issues, such as why they howled or whether they had cause to howl. His practice was to go direct to the point, and, looking upon howling as a dangerous mania, to cure it by energetic means, such as lengthy seclusion, or sea-trips to Cayenne. He was admirably seconded in all his views by the different legislative bodies who had the honour to serve under him. Whenever M. Bousse got up in the Chamber to declare that we had plenty of liberty, and that he should certainly not give us any more, he was rapturously cheered by the representatives of the people. On sundry occasions the enthusiasm excited by his words ran so high that the representatives rose from their places and clustered round him to claim the privilege of shaking his hand. Naturally, there were a few who held aloof, but to these nobody paid any attention. They belonged to that reprehensible class who are never satisfied, and who—as M. Bousse himself remarked—would still find something to ask for, even if they had got all they wanted.

Thus things passed off pleasantly for everybody, save those who howled, those who paid double taxes, and those who perished at Timbuctoo. M. Bousse was completely happy, and every year at the opening of the session his Majesty our Emperor was wont to compliment us on the perfect order that reigned throughout the country, “ thanks partly to the devoted loyalty of the population, but thanks also to the zeal of that intelligent administration so wisely governed and so nobly represented by—M. Bousse.” The general impression amongst the public was that we should never be rid of M. Bousse ; that he would hold grimly to his post so long as there was breath in his body ; and that we should not hear the last of him until he was safely lodged under a splendid mausoleum erected with the public money as a tribute to his political

worth. Even the Republicans, who are not usually a desponding race, took gloomy views of matters in thinking of M. Bousse. They counted with despair the number of rivals who had unsuccessfully tried to supplant him ; they noted dismally how unavailing had been the efforts of the press, the jibes of the public, the groans of the taxpayer. They likened him in their misery to a solid block of granite against which the hardest bullets are flattened as thin as wafers ; and some of them went so far as to say that even a revolution would be powerless to move him. Before being a rabid Imperialist, M. Bousse had been a rabid Republican, and before that an Orleanist ; in the event of a revolution there was no apparent reason why he should not become a Republican again, if it only suited his purpose.

However, there are events which defeat the previsions of man, and even those of Cabinet Ministers. Blocks of granite sometimes give way with amazing suddenness ; lofty towers have a knack of coming down when nobody expects them ; certain steeples, reputed immovable, have been known to crumble over the heads of their unprepared admirers in less time than it takes to write it ; and M. Bousse, who during twenty years had astonished mankind by his solidity, was destined to astonish them still more by the abruptness with which he tumbled from his place at the moment when he seemed most safe. For, one bright morning in spring, it was noised abroad throughout Paris, and amidst what general stupefaction I leave the candid reader to judge, that the terrific M. Bousse, at whose frown the prefects, sub-prefects, mayors, and sub-mayors turned pale, was no longer to be dreaded ; that he had had a quarrel with the Emperor ; that he was tottering on his pedestal ; nay, more, that he had actually resigned, and was now purely and simply M. Bousse, not his Excellency the Minister as heretofore.

How the rumour first stole out of the Tuileries and crept thence into the State offices, thence into the columns of a few newspapers, and thence on to the Boulevards, whence it was flashed with the speed of lightning to the four corners of Paris, is a question which I leave others to solve, seeing that secrets, even the most hermetically bottled, are notoriously volatile in their essence, and evaporate with a subtlety which has always confounded me. On the day when the rumour set out upon its journey through the capital, it had reached to the furthestmost limits of the city by noon ; and towards the hour of two the Place de la Bourse presented that animated appearance which connoisseurs know to be premonitory of a row. There was no mistaking the signs, it was evident there was something in the wind. The great square round the Exchange was filled with a restless, motley, bewildered crowd, surging in a compact torrent towards the steps of the building with consternation written on their faces. At every moment broughams and cabs rattled up through the adjoining streets bearing senators and merchants, generals and ballet-dancers, deputies and actresses, all troubled and excited by the reports of the morning ; all muttering in tones of dismay and doubt the name of

M. Bousse, all wondering anxiously what his resignation could mean, and whether it was not the portent of an immediate catastrophe. Inside the building two thousand Christians, with a percentage of Hebrews, were roaring, plunging, and fighting. Those who have never beheld the Paris Bourse on a day of panic should go and see the sight as an instructive example of the state of commotion into which humanity may be thrown by the sudden descent of a Cabinet Minister. At one time women were admitted within the Exchange, but it was found that men could make noise enough without their help. At present they cluster in distracted groups outside the building, looking out for their respective brokers, and bearing down upon them with indignant ejaculations, ten or twelve together (when a Frenchwoman hears that the funds are declining she always attributes it to her stock-broker). Some of the brokers resist and make violent efforts to escape; but what is a man to do with a countess clinging to his sleeve, an actress to his collar, a ballet-dancer to his shirt-front, and an applewoman to his coat-tails? In France, thanks to the encouragement of popular government loans, all classes of the community, male and female, gamble at the Bourse; and the applewoman, whose one share in the Mexican or Kamtschatka twenty per cents. gives tokens of depression, is not the one whose wailings are least lamentable. Those of the brokers who are fortunate enough to get clear from their female clients, rush through the open doors of the Exchange, and try to make head unmolested against the angry sea of howlers that chokes up the great hall. On every side they are met by raving, beseeching, or furious shouts, by wild orders to sell, by flushed faces, starting eyeballs, and piteous entreaties not to allow their clients to be ruined. Your panic-stricken Frenchman is not a cheerful customer. He shrieks, he weeps, he strikes out with his fists; happily a provident Administration confiscates his umbrella at the door, otherwise the transaction of business on important occasions would curiously resemble a pitched battle.

In the afternoon of M. Bousse's rumoured resignation it was all the brokers could do to avoid being rent into fragments. The uproar was terrific: one would have said that the Cossacks had been signalled in the Rue de Rivoli. The policemen deputed to keep order leaned resignedly against the pillars, and committed their trust to Providence. The door-keepers stuffed cotton into their ears, and shrugged their shoulders in disgust. The people who lived in the neighbourhood, and could hear what was going on, thrust their heads out of the window, and marvelled in silence. The only individuals who seemed impassive were the newspaper-reporters, who congregated together, hoping pleasantly that a general scuffle was at hand, and exchanging remarks with that light spirit of drollery peculiar to their kind. On every side the name of M. Bousse floated uppermost, like the plank of a wreck. Some affirmed that he was dying, others that he was dead; right and left, fore and aft, were the same exclamations uttered as to what the country could possibly do without him. Truly the money-market is a logical and glorious thing! Here

was a statesman universally noted for his incapacity : there was not one citizen in a hundred but was thoroughly convinced that of all the Ministers whose policy had been disastrous to the nation the first and foremost was M. Bousse. Morning and evening they called heaven to witness of his extravagance, his obstinacy, and his wrong-headedness. Had it been confidentially put to any Frenchman, taken at hazard, who was the most incompetent statesman of ancient and modern times, that Frenchman would have answered, without a moment's doubt, M. Bousse. And yet at the first rumour that this unsatisfactory personage was going to mismanage the affairs of the country no longer, the whole city dived headlong into a panic ; whilst the funds, as a mark of respect to the Minister who during his term of office had taken so many and such curious liberties with them, felt in duty bound to lower their quotations by one franc fifty centimes, just as ships of war, which lower their pennons by way of salute.

At half-past two the excitement had already risen to such a pitch that, as is customary on days of monetary insanity, the Commissaire of the Bourse telegraphed to M. Bousse's residence and to the Préfecture de Police, in these terms :—

“ Great perturbation. Reports of resignation, death, ministerial crisis, war. Official denial much needed.”

Five-and-twenty minutes later the Prefect of Police himself appeared on the scene, and amidst renewed uproar, loud cheers, groans, foot-stamping, hat-waving, and personal encounters betwixt those who had speculated on the fall and those who hoped in a rise, the following despatch was posted up :—

“ The rumours respecting a ministerial crisis and the resignation of M. Bousse are utterly groundless. An inquiry is about to be instituted into the authors of such rumours, and proceedings will be taken against them.

“ (Signed) BOUTEILLE,
 “ Prefect of Police.”

“ I always told you so ! ” chuckled a journalist who was present. “ It will take more storms than one to sink M. Bousse ! ” And he went off to write an article, in which he compared the irrepressible Minister to the big pyramid built by Cheops, king of Egypt.

During the rest of the day the public funds cut such fantastic capers in their efforts to rise again that the brokers and jobbers of Capel Court, hearing of the same by the usual telegrams, resolved that their French brethren must have been drinking. A few fortunes were lost that afternoon—perhaps a score or so, no more ; a few joint-stock companies that had been secretly ailing received such a shaking that soon after they collapsed, they and their shareholders together ; a hundred or more of speculators who had been roaring louder than was meet, were laid up for

the remainder of the week with sore throats ; and a few bankers, whom the panic had caught unprepared, rejoiced much that the Prefect's despatch should have come just in the nick of time, and thanked heaven for its mercies. Beyond this there was nothing of any consequence, and the money-world, barring those who had sold out before five minutes to three, went to bed contented ; the politicians of the Boulevards declaring in the meanwhile that the idea of M. Bousse's resignation was the most absurd thing they had ever heard.

Next morning the official journal issued a third edition at twelve o'clock. It contained this announcement, printed in big type, with leads :—

“ This morning, at the termination of the Cabinet Council, his Excellency M. Bousse tendered his resignation to the Emperor. M. Bousse's resignation has been accepted.”

II.

Although I have hitherto kept myself in the background, I think the time has now come for stating that I was distantly connected with M. Bousse, not by ties of blood, but by those of red tape. In other words, I filled the humble but ambitious post of clerk in the department where M. Bousse was autocrat absolute. He and I were at the two extremes of the same ladder,—he at the top, I at the bottom. When I met M. Bousse, I stood aside and bowed ; when M. Bousse met me, he returned my bow and passed on. Once a fortnight I attended the receptions of Madame Bousse, and on such occasions M. Bousse added a smile to his bow. But it was the smile he gave everybody, and I individually had nothing to do with it. I was less than nobody in M. Bousse's eyes. I don't believe he so much as knew my name. The only time I ever held converse with him he said, “ It seems to me I have seen your face before,—the Viscount Tubereuse, I believe ? ”

“ Pardon me, your Excellency, my name is Brune—Louis Brune.”

“ Ah ! Any relation to Marshal Brune ? ”

“ No, your Excellency, none.”

“ Oh ! ” said M. Bousse ; and he walked away without further troubling himself about me. What he would have said had it been told him that I cumulated the functions of journalist with those of Government clerk, and that the “ *Boussiana* ” (or “ criticisms in rhyme on the doings of M. Bousse ”) published weekly in the *Charivari* were the work of my pen, is not worth while inquiring. M. Bousse's aversion to journalists was only equalled by his contempt for them. He one day boasted in the Tribune that he could buy up the whole lot of us for half a million francs ; and when asked why he didn't do it, answered dryly that he had a better use for his money.

His fall could only be matter of complete indifference to me, and this for two reasons : the first, that M. Bousse was certain to have a successor ;

and the second, that, as far as I could make out, one Cabinet Minister being the exact counterpart of another, it was idle work to occupy oneself about changes. Nevertheless, I was destined to suffer tribulation on account of M. Bousse's resignation, for during the week that followed it, I was no sooner descried in the streets than I was set upon by my friends and neighbours, and carried off under strong escort to answer the question, *Quomodo cecidit potens?*—how on earth had it happened that M. Bousse had come to grief? I found it was no use to plead ignorance. At first I tried it out of sheer respect for truth; but seeing that I only drew down public contempt upon myself, I waxed ferocious, and gave my own version of the affair from a new point of view. "Whilst the Emperor and M. Bousse," said I, "were quarrelling together, I was looking through the keyhole, and this is what I saw: M. Bousse wanted to fight the Prussians; the Emperor didn't. 'What!' exclaimed M. Bousse, rising menacingly in his place. 'Will you suffer the slur of 1815 to remain unavenged?' 'Don't dictate to me, sir,' had replied the Emperor, with a frown. 'I am master here, and intend to fight whom I please.' Upon this, M. Bousse had drawn his portfolio from under his arm with freezing dignity and laid it disdainfully on the table, saying, 'In that case, Sire, you shall fight alone; but mind, if there's a revolution next week, don't blame me for it; and so had departed."

Some of my hearers believed this version, and others did not; but these last were a minority. Our French official system of keeping everybody in the dark is so sound, that, by the help of it, you may get a Frenchman to believe anything. Most of my hearers swallowed my words with religious faith, and retailed them to their kinsfolk and acquaintances. After going the round of all the cafés, and being considerably embellished by the voyage, my story—stripped, of course, of the keyhole episode—appeared in most of the papers, and was telegraphed thence, through Mr. Reuter's agency, to London, where it formed the text of a remarkable article on misplaced ambition in *The Times*. The only thing that weighed somewhat against it was the fact that a few days after M. Bousse's resignation, the official journal published a letter sent to him by the Emperor to express his Majesty's sincere regrets at parting from so valued a servant; and along with the letter two decrees, the one raising M. Bousse to the Privy Council,* and the other ennobling him by the mirificent title of *Duc de Tripoteux*. But the politicians of the Boulevards, to whom I have once already alluded, declared knowingly that these two decrees were only blinds, and that the letter was intended to throw dust into the eyes of Herr von Bismarck. I may remark cursorily that every

* The French Privy Council must not be confounded with the English. The number of Imperial Privy Councillors rarely exceeds five. The dignity is a very high one, the highest indeed that can be conferred, for it is a mark of the Emperor's intimate friendship; there is a salary of 100,000 francs attached to it. In the event of the Emperor's death, before the majority of the Prince Imperial, the Privy Council with the Empress and Prince Napoleon would form the Council of Regency.

official act of which the Parisian public do not understand the significance is set down as a trap laid cunningly for Herr von Bismarck.

One would have thought that M. Bousse's ex-colleagues, or the official journal, or, failing them, the semi-official prints, would have furnished some authentic explanation of M. Bousse's retirement; but such is not the way under the Imperial régime. Just as the motives that actuated the policy of M. Bousse during his tenure of office were shrouded in impenetrable mystery, so also the reasons that induced him to lay down his seals were fated, in so far as the majority of the public were concerned, to remain veiled in night. It is true the official paper affirmed that M. Bousse had merely withdrawn from a desire to take rest after his long and arduous labours; but this assertion was received with such general cries of gammon that it was thought unnecessary to repeat it. A reception equally unfavourable was given to another statement which purported to ascribe his Excellency's resignation to a statesmanlike and generous wish to see some new blood infused into the Cabinet. The public were willing enough to believe that M. Bousse might have availed himself of such a pretext to turn all his colleagues out of the Ministry; but they declined to admit that he could ever have thought it a sufficient reason for going away himself. If, then, we except the hypothesis of relentless hate to Herr von Bismarck, there remained only one supposition, to wit, that reforms of some sort were at hand, and that the departure of M. Bousse signified the turning over a new leaf,—the inauguration of a new policy.

But . . . we had so often been taken in this way; we had seen so many Ministers whose advent meant the turning over of a new leaf; and we had found so invariably that the new leaf and the old one were precisely the same thing, that we had grown sceptic at last, and taken to wishing that his Majesty would turn over his leaves less frequently and make more of those he had before him. Besides, even if a new policy was intended, we could not see that there had been any actual necessity for dismissing M. Bousse. True, M. Bousse disliked reform; but so do most Ministers until they go out of office. M. Bousse, however, had swallowed such an infinite number of leeks in his lifetime, and done so with such perfect good grace, that it was doing him an injustice to suppose that he would not have swallowed as many more as were requisite to keep him on good terms with his Sovereign. M. Bousse was a man of experience; he was not one of those who ever quarrel with their bread and butter.

These reflections, which testified to our abundant loyalty and might have proved to a shrewd observer how pleasant and easy a people we French are to govern, were bandied about from café to club, from club to drawing-room, and served to carry us over the first week that followed the ministerial crisis. After that, finding we had talked enough of M. Bousse, we voted for a change of subject, and began to speculate as to who would be his successor.

Copy right of child ; must not forget
to credit author before giving out without written permission of
copyright owner. Please credit a copy of this work to the
University of New South Wales Library.

III.

There were the usual number of names put forward—that is, about ten or a dozen ; but after being winnowed and sifted, the quota of likely candidates was reduced to five, M. le Duc de Vermoulue, M. le Comte de Pont Cassé, M. Joufflu de la Joufflière, M. Bourdon, and a Councillor of State who had been seen hovering a good deal about court of late, and whose name was Ernest Camion.

M. le Duc de Vermoulue is so well known throughout the universe, that it is unnecessary to expatiate on his merits. He was seventy-five years old, a Privy Councillor and a Senator. He had been already six or seven times Minister, and had served as ambassador under three dynasties, to say nothing of the Republic. When he arrayed himself in full dress he was so covered with stars and crosses that he looked like an ambulating model of the firmament. He had no teeth and wore a wig. There had been much wit in him in his younger days, but being slightly deaf now, he was obliged to have recourse to an ear-trumpet, and to ask his friends kindly to bawl when they wished to speak to him. He was also subject to occasional attacks of paralysis and had lost the use of his left leg, but otherwise he was perfectly sound. His chances seemed very good ; the Jockey Club backed him to win at two to one.

M. le Comte de Pont Cassé was only seventy-three, but he made up for it by being bent double like a right angle. He was undergoing hydropathic treatment for chronic lumbago, and had a servant always behind his chair to pour decanters of cold water down his back. For this reason it was generally hoped that he would succeed ; to see a Minister publicly watered in the tribune of the Corps Législatif like a flower-pot would be something new and interesting.

M. Joufflu de la Joufflière represented the money interest. He had been chairman of an incalculable number of joint-stock companies and had stuck by them nobly so long as they had prospered. His name had never been mixed up in anything unpleasant, such as the declaration of a five-centime dividend or a prosecution on the part of the shareholders ; he always withdrew in time to avoid these vexations. It was he who, as head of the famous house, Joufflu, Schwindleheim, Rifard and Takehemin, had negotiated the Polynesian loan, the Mesopotamian loan, the Irrawaddi loan, and many other loans which for unaccountable reasons had not turned out quite so well as was expected. He wore velvet waistcoats, and talked much of the necessity of bridling the press, which was constantly interfering with monetary operations. It was universally admitted that his financial abilities would prove of invaluable service to the country. The American colony in Paris betted heavily upon him, and Mr. Josiah Tweeks of Massachusetts, banker of the Rue de Rivoli, backed him to lick his weight in wild foxes ; which is the best proof possible of his talents.

M. Bourdon was chiefly famous for having declared, when judge in a small country town, that it was a lucky thing there were no opposition

papers within his jurisdiction, for that he was not a man to stand nonsense. Upon this he had been immediately decorated and removed to a larger town, where, as it so happened, there were two opposition papers. M. Bourdon had made short work of them, and had then been transferred to Paris and appointed public prosecutor-general. He had a habit of saying, "My *opinion is*," laying particular stress on the word *My*, as if the moment *he* thought anything it was ample reason why everybody should do the same. He was very fat and had a peculiar bellow of his own, which made the lamp-glasses jingle, and threw quiet-minded people into a cold perspiration. A man of such parts was sure to be a Minister some day; it was only a question of time.

M. Ernest Camion, the last on the list, was a handsome man of forty. His talent was unquestionable, and he had the merit of being exempt from prejudices. He had started in life as a barrister, but finding the road to forensic fame too tedious, had branched off and taken to journalism; beginning as a Red Republican, and gradually toning down his opinions as he went on, until the day when the Government had offered him his price—that is, the Legion of Honour and a seat in the Chamber. His rise had been astonishingly rapid, for, although he had crossed over to the Imperialist side, to enter the House as an official candidate, he had never sold himself entirely. With a view to enlisting him for good the Government had put him in possession of a semi-official paper, supported out of the public taxes. But M. Camion, whilst serving the dynasty with tolerable zeal, knew how to break out into those occasional fits of independence, which render a "dynastic" journalist interesting, and convince the court of the necessity for petting him well to keep him in good humour. M. Ernest Camion was much liked by women, and much hated by men, which is usually the case with minds of his stamp. His politeness and impassiveness were proverbial, but his disdain for mankind was so perfect that it amounted to indulgence. For some time previous to the fall of M. Bousse, he had announced himself in drawing-rooms as the antagonist of that personage; not that he had any particular dislike for M. Bousse, but because it suited his vanity to be the enemy of a Minister before whom everybody else fell flat. M. Bousse was afraid of him, and had tried several times, first to win and then to crush him; but without success. M. Camion's chances were much canvassed on the Boulevards, where he was rated at his true worth as a man who was far too clever and too unscrupulous not to attain to the very highest honours.

Contrary to the usual practice, we were kept more than a fortnight in doubt as to which of these five gentlemen were to be entrusted with the task of governing us. On ordinary occasions the matter is settled very quickly; but this once it seemed as though the rival merits were so nicely balanced that it was a delicate business to establish a preference. We—the clerks in the office—rather hoped for the Duke de Vermoulue; for it was well known that that venerable nobleman had a paternal

fondness for abuses, and was not likely to interfere with any of those which had sprung up so luxuriantly in our department during M. Bousse's rule. A younger Minister might take it into his head to work reforms, which would be disastrous. Claude Persil, who was my desk-mate, and who, like me, spent the six hours he should have devoted to the business of the State, in writing works of fiction, hinted that it might be the deuce to pay if such a man as M. Camion were chosen. M. Camion was acquainted with several of us, having met us in different newspaper-offices ; and it was not at all improbable that he might remind us confidentially of the fact, and keep a sharp look-out on the way in which we spent our time. We all agreed with Claude Persil that this would be undesirable in the extreme, and the alarm took so firmly a hold of us, that it was with a sort of consternation we heard one afternoon that our worst fears were likely to be realized, for that M. Ernest Camion had been summoned to the Tuilleries !

That evening there was a grand ball given by the Princess of Sedlitz, the Austrian ambassadress. Everybody in Paris was there, for the Princess received so well, and with such consummate tact, that she had made of her house a sort of neutral territory, where all parties and all opinions met and mixed with each other as under a flag of truce. It was one of the only houses, perhaps the only house, in Paris where the red-radical Deputy and his adversary the Secretary of State could bow to one another across a supper-table and exchange a civil word and a smile in passing. There the journalist, lately sentenced to three months' imprisonment, elbowed the judge who had condemned him, and stopped to bandy a few good-humoured remarks to prove that there lurked no rancour within him. There again Legitimist dukes, with their heads erect, answered by Olympian salutes the advances of Imperialist bankers ; and Legitimist duchesses, covered with lace three centuries old, curtseyed grandly and proudly to duchesses of the Chaussée d'Antin. It was a house where everybody met anybody ; and where anybody so minded went for the purpose of seeing everybody.

On the night to which I am alluding, the crowd was enough to suffocate one ; so much so, that after making a few turns round the rooms, and discovering that if we wished to dance we should each have about a square foot upon which to manoeuvre, my friend Claude Persil and I resolved upon retiring. Perhaps on any other night we should have stayed notwithstanding the crowd, but that day we were not quite in good temper, from thinking so much about M. Camion ; and Claude Persil, who believed in specifics, suggested that we should go to the club and try whether losing a few *louis* over *baccarat* would not set us to rights. However, man proposes and the Fates dispose, for just as we reached the grand staircase the name of this very M. Camion, pronounced aloud by one of the powdered footmen, brought us both to a standstill, and made us turn round. The great man, who for the last four-and-twenty hours had been the talk of Paris, had entered the reception-room

and was making his way towards the hostess. As usual he was irreproachably dressed ; and he wore a slight flush on his face, like a man who has been playing a great stake and won it. He bowed with his quiet grace to the Princess, who received him with a charming smile—one of the smiles she reserved specially for the Great of the Earth.

" Monsieur Camion," she said, " they tell me you have been to the Tuilleries to-day ; may I congratulate you on your visit ? "

" Madame," he answered gallantly, " if, as a Minister, you allow me to remain as much your devoted servant as ever, you may indeed congratulate me. You are the first," he added, smiling, " to whom I have confessed my new title of half an hour's standing."

" Then let me be the first, your Excellency,"* she replied with a graceful curtsey, " to wish you many long years in office, a complaisant Sovereign, a docile Parliament, an obedient Senate, and all the other good things of which Ministers dream."

This said, she took his arm. " Your Excellency will grant me your first favour," she continued, " by walking round the rooms with me." And they both went away together, he proud and happy, as men are in their hours of triumph ; she not sorry to show the new Minister to her guests, and to chat with him a little to see what stuff he was made of.

As they walked through the ball-room, the dancers stopped and parted in two rows of bowing heads, right and left, for the news had spread in five minutes that the successor of M. Bousse was M. Camion, and everybody was anxious to do his or her homage to the rising sun.

" Look at all those people," exclaimed Claude Persil, musingly ; " and then tell me what you think of honesty and consistency as means of earning the approval of one's fellows. If Ernest Camion had remained a Republican, and never sold himself, do you fancy he would be walking round these rooms at this minute, with a princess on his arm and a procession of noblemen, bankers, senators, and ambassadors at his heels ? Louis Brune, my friend, I vote we go home and apprise the Emperor by letter that we are both of us open to a liberal offer, and that if he will only make a fair bid we will renounce the *Charivari*, the *Figaro*, the *Tintamarre*, and everything else—not excepting our radical convictions—for his sake. Do you know, the force of a good example is so great, that at this moment I feel the most violent inclination to turn my coat and shout *Vive l'Empereur !*"

As he said this we reached the door, and shook hands. " Good-night," he sighed ; " think over my scheme of writing to his Majesty, and meanwhile perhaps we had better keep away from *baccarat*, for it may be prudent to husband our *louis*. I foresee that our new chief will be anxious

* In France, the title of Excellency is given to all Cabinet Ministers, to Ambassadors, to the Chancellor of the Legion of Honour, and to the Presidents of the Senate and Corps Législatif. Before 1789, and during the first Empire, Ministers were addressed as Monseigneur.

to try his hand at reforms, in which case it will be only natural that he should begin by sending you and me about our business. Trust an old journalist for not keeping more of his *chers confrères* about him than he can possibly help. I remember, seven years ago, when I was only eighteen, hearing Camion say that governments were all *bosh*, and that the only great man in history was Robespierre. Seven years only, and now what a change! To-morrow, you'll see, this ex-republican will make us a speech about the infallibility of imperial dynasties, and next week he will give us both the sack for holding demagogic opinions. *Eheu! fugaces, Postume, Postume, labuntur anni!* Good-night again."

IV.

Ten days glided by and a part of Claude Persil's prediction was realized. M. Camion made us the speech about the infallibility of the Imperial dynasty, and he began a few reforms, such as ordering the passages to be better swept, and the windows in the offices to be better cleaned; but here his zeal for reform stopped, and beyond an occasional passing nod at Persil and me, he took no more notice of us than if we were wooden stools.

"That man routs all my preconceived notions," muttered Persil, nibbling pensively at his quill. "If old Bousse had known that we were a pair of 'reds,' and that we spent our six office hours writing subversive articles, he would have had a policeman called up to turn us out by the neck. Camion knows it, however,—or suspects it shrewdly—and says nothing. Allah achbar! Allah is great. But I confess I don't understand it."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when there was a knock at the door, and one of the messengers entered.

"M. Brune," he said, "his Excellency desires to see you."

"Hallo," muttered Persil, with an uneasy laugh, "I've been singing before we're out of the wood. Friend Louis, *adest hora*—the hour has come, and I don't like the look of it. You're going to be asked very politely to choose between serving the Government and serving your editors. If you answer that you have plenty of time to serve the two together, you will be requested to fill up a blank form of resignation, and pay a visit to the cashier to receive your arrears. After you it will be my turn, and then we shall all defile in succession. Whilst you're gone I shall pack up my papers and yours too, to save time. . . . Take it coolly."

I made no answer, because there was none to make. I nodded resignedly to Persil, and followed the messenger in silence.

"Fine day, sir," he remarked.

"Yes, very. By the way—ahem—was his Excellency in a good humour?"

"Perfect good humour, sir; but he always is. I never saw a gentleman so even-minded."

I reflected that his Excellency might be joyous from thinking that if he dismissed a dozen clerks that morning he would have twelve posts of emolument to distribute to his kinsmen, and I was not cheered by the thought.

We climbed up a carpeted staircase, and reached a red baize-covered door. The messenger threw it open, and knocked at another inside. "Come in!" cried a voice. "M. Louis Brune," announced the messenger, standing aside to let me pass, and the same moment I was alone with his Excellency.

"How do you do, M. Brune?" said he, holding out his hand. "I've sent for you to have half an hour's talk. Take a chair and sit down. No, not there; here, close to the fire. That's it. I hope I've not disturbed you. Were you busy?"

I stammered something, and reddened so confusedly that M. Camion waived the subject, and continued amiably: "I should have asked you to come before, but I have been so much occupied that I've scarce had a moment's time. How have you been getting on of late? Do you still write for M. Toupil and M. Gloupesou?"

Now for the crisis, I thought, and I rejoined, in a pleading tone,— "Your Excellency, I should really not write if I could manage without, but the salary which Government gives us is quite insufficient to ——"

"To dress you in white waistcoats, patent-leather boots, and blue frock-coats," laughed the Minister, with an arch nod at my attire. "Yes, I know it is; but, after all, M. Brune, you and the Government may cry quits, for if you young gentlemen downstairs are badly paid, you take care to do as little work as possible, so that the balance is even. My own idea has always been to reduce the number of clerks by two-thirds, and to multiply the salaries of the remainder by three, but I seem to be the only Minister of my opinion. However, that is beside the question. I've sent to ask you if you will be my private secretary?"

This time I stood upright from astonishment, half thinking the ex-journalist was hoaxing me. M. Camion continued, without paying any attention to my vagaries:—

"The salary would be 12,000 francs; you would have your rooms here; breakfast and dinner would cost you nothing. I don't know how much you earn by writing, so that I can't judge whether this is worth your acceptance. But there are several advantages attached to the place. To begin with, you will have opportunities for making the acquaintance of many people who may be useful to you in after life; and, in addition to this, your prospects of advancement will be bettered. As it is, you may have to wait a considerable number of years before you obtain a good place by seniority. As the private secretary of a Minister, however, you will have stolen a march on your friends downstairs. When I go out of office, or when you leave me, I can get you appointed sub-prefect, or something equivalent off-hand, and nobody would think of questioning your right to be so appointed."

I continued to stare at my chief in a purposeless sort of way, fumbling at my watch-chain, and rubbing my eyes furtively every now and then to make sure I was awake.

"As you may like to know," he went on in his calm voice, "why I have offered you this place in such a point-blank fashion, I will tell you candidly that I flatter myself I am a physiognomist, and I like your face. You have a straightforward look that pleases me, and I never remember to have been mistaken in my estimate of features. I have a host of friends and cousins who have asked me for this place; but I am not fond of people who ask. Besides, none of my friends and cousins seem cut out for the work I want. There are three things I require,—cheerfulness, willingness, and discretion; and I think you can give them me. What do you say?"

There was only one thing to say,—to thank him and to accept, which I did. I added something about the honour I felt, and the gratitude I should always entertain. But he cut this short with a wave of the hand.

"I am glad you accept," he observed. "But don't begin to vow gratitude for a present of which you don't yet know the value. Maybe, this day week you'll wish I had been at Jericho before giving you such a post."

"No, your Excellency!" I exclaimed, earnestly. "For under any circumstances I should still thank you for the kindness of your intentions."

"And there you would be wrong again," said he, quietly; "for I have consulted my own convenience, not yours. When you get to be my age, you will learn that men never act but from selfish motives, and that all men are alike in this respect. But enough of this. When shall you be ready to begin your duties?"

"At once."

"What do you understand by at once?"

"Now, at this very moment."

"Well done! That's what I like. My cousins and friends aforementioned would have asked me for three days to pack up their boxes, and three more after that to make arrangements; meanwhile, I should have been without a secretary. Yours is the right answer, and I shall take you at your word. There on yonder table you will find twenty-three letters from people who have written to ask for favours; you will find also the model of a letter in reply. The same letter will do for the twenty-three. I express my regret, &c., and declare myself their obedient servant. On the other table there are thirty-seven other letters from people who have been aggrieved, and pray for redress. Same answer as before,—merely adding that, after impartial investigation, facts seem perfectly established; reversal of decision impossible; regrets, &c.; and obedient servant. You must write these replies, and have them despatched by this evening's post. It's a question of two hours' work,—no more. After that you'll go home and dress, and come here to dinner.

You'll give orders, too, to have all your luggage sent to your rooms here, and from this moment you may consider yourself one of the fixtures of this establishment."

So saying, M. Camion took up a formidable bundle of despatches and rang for his two official secretaries, whilst I withdrew to write the three-and-twenty letters to the people who wanted favours and the seven-and-thirty to those who wanted redress.

V.

If I rejoiced greatly at finding myself of a sudden the secretary of a powerful Minister, it was not so much from the satisfaction of feeling that I was on the fair road to fortune, nor from the gratification of living in a sumptuous residence, guarded by sentinels who paced vigilantly under my windows whilst I slumbered, and saluted me deferentially when I walked abroad; but I was proud to be in the confidence of a man upon whom every eye in the country was bent. When people saw me they nudged each other and said, "That young fellow is Camion's private secretary," and I felt as though a cubit had been added to my stature. I entertained, moreover, a kind of affection for my new master, albeit his inveterate scepticism and his total disbelief in anything like disinterestedness, consistency, or patriotism, often disconcerted me. From the very first day he admitted me to a view of his thoughts and showed himself to me as he really was. At first I was astounded by what I considered his total want of principle, for he talked about men, and the art of ruling them, in a way that made one's hair stand. But I gradually discovered that he was more lenient in practice than in theory, and that his unbounded contempt for men made him disdain to oppress them. Every morning it was my business to read him the papers, that is, all the passages in them which concerned him. His former allies, the Republicans, were very bitter, and attacked him with never-ceasing spite. "Let them attack!" he used to cry, carelessly. "If they think I'm going to enrich them and make martyrs of them by prosecutions they are mistaken." When he had been vilified with an unusual degree of violence, he sometimes gave himself the pleasure of sending an invitation to dinner to the writer of the article. Five times out of six the invitation was accepted, and he used to shrug his shoulders and laugh. I could see, however, that in spite of his apparent indifference there were moments when he seemed harassed by doubts as to the security of his position. At such times he would spring up suddenly, look at me in the face and say,

"Under such and such circumstances what should you do, Brune?"

"You want my opinion?" I once asked, astonished.

"Yes," he rejoined. "From thinking too intently over his own affairs a man's brain often gets muddled, and in such moments he needs the advice of a fresh, active mind. Suppose, if you can, that you are talking politics with your friend Persil, down below, and that you hear I have done this or that, or stand in such and such a position, what should you

say? You would exclaim, 'If I were Camion I should have done so and so ;' that's what I want you to do now. Come, young man, speak out. In you I am consulting public opinion; only be candid, please, for otherwise it would be like consulting an echo."

I was always candid, and he seemed to like my answers, though they seldom tallied with his own opinions. "You and I," said he, "look at humanity from opposite ends of the telescope; you through the thin end, I through the thick one. You see men larger than they are, you invest them with qualities they don't possess: to me they all seem pygmies. Doubtless we are both in the wrong, but I incline to think I am nearer the truth than you."

The number of petitions he received was something amazing; and I seize this occasion for informing people who petition Cabinet Ministers that they might really employ their foolscap to better purpose. M. Camion had the petitions read to him whilst he was taking his chocolate at eight in the morning. When he had listened to twenty lines, he invariably said, "That will do, throw it down; pass on to another." The only occasion on which I ever knew him depart from this rule was in the case of a man who wrote briefly as follows:—

"SIR,—I was wronged thirty-five years ago by one of your predecessors, and I have appealed to every succeeding Minister since—heaven knows how many!—for redress, without obtaining it. My wife tells me that I shall be more fortunate with you. I don't believe it; for I have arrived at the conviction that all Ministers are equally civil and equally deaf. But as my wife insists, I send this letter, and beg that you will kindly take no notice of it.

"Your Excellency's obedient servant,

"JEAN COURTAUD,

"(formerly Government clerk, now—thanks to grievance
aforesaid—tavern waiter, No. 393, Rue St. Denis.)"

"Look out for that man's affair amongst the office-papers," said M. Camion, "and bring all you can find about him to me." The case happened to be one of real hardship. M. Camion reinstated the man, promoted him, and caused two thousand pounds compensation to be given him out of the public funds. This, I repeat, was the only occasion on which M. Camion did not consign a petition to the waste-paper basket.

When he had been three months in office, and had thoroughly settled down to his work, he proved—what many had doubted—that he was born for commandment, and he took the lead of the Ministry as naturally as though his title had been Grand Vizier or Prime Minister. Still, although he seemed to prosper, his anxiety and fits of pensiveness increased. The Corps Législatif was going to open in a few weeks, and the prospect of meeting that assembly appeared to make him uneasy. The public were looking forward expectantly to his *début* at the Tribune; for although he

had sat in the House he had not often made speeches there ; his reputation as a debater had therefore yet to be established.

One evening, returning very late from a Cabinet Council at the Tuilleries, he threw himself in a chair with his gold-laced coat on, and exclaimed, with stifled rage, " Brune, do you know who is the real head and mainspring of this Cabinet ? "

" I never doubted it was you," was my answer.

" Well, you're wrong ; it's M. Bousse or the Duc de Tripoteux, whichever you please."

" M. Bousse ! "

" Yes, the very man. You think him a simpleton, so did I, and that's been my mistake ; I've set my foot in a trap."

There was a long pause. M. Camion rose and paced the room excitedly, pulling off his white gloves and stopping at last to take a survey of himself in the glass. He had never looked handsomer ; but I had never seen such an expression of mortification on his face.

" Only to think," he cried, with a dry laugh, " that that old fellow should have fooled me, and fooled me so completely too ! Egad ! there's nothing for it. I see I'm done for. I shall have to throw up my seals and begin the fight again. Do you know why M. Bousse left the Ministry ? " he added, turning to me abruptly.

" I never understood why ; but I supposed it was because he did not like the idea of reform, and was afraid that the majority in the House might escape him. He preferred resigning to being turned out."

" That was my opinion," muttered M. Camion. " I said to myself, ' There's an old fox who sees that his day has gone by. He has withheld reform so long that he feels he cannot with any decency yield for the mere sake of keeping his place. Besides, he probably guesses that even if he gave in he could only last out a few months longer ; for he would lose all prestige, and be turned over without difficulty.' Well, it seems I've been reckoning without my host, for M. Bousse's only reason for withdrawing was to smash me and get me out of the way."

" I don't understand."

" Yes, M. Bousse did me the honour of being afraid of me. He thought that I was the only man who stood between him and a perpetual lease of power. He knew that I was ambitious, knew that I hated him, knew that I plotted against him. He saw too, that I had all the trumps in my hand, and that if I only played with ordinary cleverness his game was hopelessly lost. My own game, mark, was childishly simple : I had only to wait ; the reform question was becoming every day more urgent. If M. Bousse resisted, his unpopularity must eventually have overwhelmed him ; if he gave in, his prestige, as I have already said, was gone, and he must inevitably have been dismissed. I, in the meanwhile, had only got to work my influence at court and to angle for popularity by joining the moderate Liberals. The result would have been that on the day when M. Bousse tumbled down in ruins, I should have been his natural

successor, and should have stepped into office without a rival, being supported by the court on the one hand, and by the most sensible fraction of the nation on the other. Barring accidents, I might have kept my seat twenty years like my predecessor, and ruled in peace and quietness."

"But how has M. Bousse's resignation prevented this?"

"By bringing me to take office before I was ripe for it. Remember, young man, that the one secret of success in life is to watch the tide and to put out your ship only at the right moment. I put out mine too soon. I had influence enough at court, but I had no popularity; that is, no hold on the nation, and I am like the man whose house was on the quicksand. Next month, when our Corps Législatif meets, I shall be asked for the promised reforms, and I shall have to bring in a bill of some kind. If I suggest a really liberal one, down goes my influence on the court side; I shall most likely be cut adrift at once; and as the public mistrust me, I shall find no sympathy in that quarter. If, on the contrary, I carry down a half-and-half bill purporting to give a good deal, and giving virtually nothing, I shall attach my name to an unpopular and ridiculous measure; which will be like tying a millstone round my neck. I shall be stamped henceforth as a shilly-shallying hesitator. I, who hate half measures, and hold that a man should either give freely or refuse firmly! A pretty prospect truly; I see nothing for it but resignation."

"But cannot you by any possibility bring in a bill to satisfy both the court and the nation?"

"Yes, I might if I were popular with both; but, as it is, any measure I submit to the House will be received with suspicion, and be laughed at altogether, unless it is honest and complete. You may play any tricks with people who believe in you; you may palm off upon them spurious bills for genuine, half measures for whole ones, but you can't do this with men who are on the look-out."

"But, your Excellency," I insinuated, "I do not see how all this is to benefit M. Bousse."

"Why, by enabling him to oppose my bill on the ground that it is not liberal enough. That's the game he intends to play; it will make him popular and send him sailing into the Cabinet again spite of me and everybody else."

"Yes, but how about his prestige? I thought I understood you to say that he could not decently stand up for reform after having withheld it so long."

"My poor Brune!" exclaimed M. Camion, "have you yet to learn that in our country a statesman is only unpopular so long as he is in power, and that once in opposition he becomes an idol. If M. Bousse chose to declare to-morrow that he was a Radical, and had always been so, people would forget his twenty years in office and see in him only a man who was putting his immense influence at their service. I am no match for him as we stand at present. My only chance is to throw down my portfolio with as much noise as possible; to sing out at the top of my voice

that I will not pass such an illusive measure as that which the court proposes; to quarrel with the court, to make myself factious and disagreeable; to frighten Emperor, Empress, and the whole family. By these means I shall, perhaps, succeed in placing myself as I stood before; the nation will praise my disinterestedness, and the court will kootoo to me from sheer terror. To do all this, however, I must first resign, and goodness knows whether, even if everything turns out well, I shall ever have again the same chance as I had a few months ago!"

So saying, M. Camion silently stripped himself of his ministerial coat, still bran-new and glistening, and laid it on the sofa. "When shall I wear you again, I wonder?" said he, musingly; after which he unbuckled his sword, put on a dressing-gown, lit a cigarette, and sat down at his desk to write. He was slightly pale, but the look of mortification had left him, and he seemed almost unconcerned.

"You are a little young to be a sub-prefect, Brune," he said, with a flitting smile; "but no matter: there are three posts vacant, Arteux, Gency, and Boisfeuillé. Which will you have?"

"But your Excellency is not really in earnest?" I stammered. "You are not going to resign?" And I felt something very like emotion creeping over me.

He looked at me attentively for a moment—it was less than a single second—and for the first time since I knew him, I thought his glance moistened.

Next morning he was no longer Minister, and I was sub-prefect.

VI.

The successor of M. Ernest Camion has not yet been appointed; but the general opinion is that, after an *interim*, which will be filled by his Excellency M. le Duc de Vermoulin, the seals will again be intrusted to that patriotic statesman who recently declared at a public dinner that the one ambition of his life had been to take rank as a humble pioneer of the liberal party, and that on the day of his death the words "liberty" and "people's rights" would be found engraved on his heart. I mean, of course, to M. le Duc de Tripoteux, better known as M. Bousse.

St. Paul and Protestantism.

I.

MONSIEUR RENAN sums up his recent interesting volume on St. Paul by saying :—“After having been for three hundred years, thanks to Protestantism, the Christian doctor *par excellence*, Paul is now coming to an end of his reign.” All through his book Monsieur Renan is possessed with a sense of this close relationship between St. Paul and Protestantism. Protestantism has made Paul, he says ; Pauline doctrine is identified with Protestant doctrine ; Paul is a Protestant doctor, and the counterpart of Luther. Monsieur Renan has a strong distaste for Protestantism, and this distaste extends itself, therefore, to the Protestant Paul. The reign of this Protestant is now coming to an end, and such a consummation evidently has Monsieur Renan’s approval.

St. Paul is now coming to an end of his reign. Precisely the contrary, I venture to think, is the judgment to which a true criticism of men and of things leads us. The Protestantism which has so used and abused St. Paul is coming to an end ; its organizations, strong and active as they look, are touched with the finger of death ; its fundamental ideas, sounding forth still every week from thousands of pulpits, have in them no significance and no power for the progressive thought of humanity. But the reign of the real St. Paul is only beginning ; his fundamental ideas, disengaged from the elaborate misconceptions with which Protestantism has overlaid them, will have an influence in the future greater than any which they have yet had—an influence proportioned to their correspondence with a number of the deepest and most permanent facts of human nature itself.

Elsewhere I have pointed out how, for us in this country, Puritanism is the strong and special representative of Protestantism. The Church of England existed before Protestantism, and contains much besides Protestantism ; remove the schemes of doctrine, Calvinistic or Arminian, which for Protestantism, merely as such, make the very substance of its religion, and all which is most valuable in the Church of England would still remain. These schemes, or the ideas out of which they spring, show themselves in the Prayer Book ; but they are not what gives the Prayer Book its importance and value. But Puritanism exists for the sake of these schemes ; its organizations are inventions for enforcing them more purely and thoroughly. Questions of discipline and ceremonies have always been admitted to be in themselves secondary ; it is because that conception of the ways of God to man which Puritanism has formed for itself appears to Puritanism superlatively true and precious, that Independents and Baptists and Methodists in

England, and Presbyterians in Scotland, have been impelled to constitute for inculcating it a church-order where it might be less swamped by the additions and ceremonies of men, might be more simply and effectively enounced, and might stand more absolute and central, than in the church-order of Anglicans or Roman Catholics. Of that conception the cardinal points are fixed by the terms election and justification. These terms come from the writings of St. Paul, and the scheme which Puritanism has constructed with them professes to be St. Paul's scheme. The same scheme, or something very like it, has been, and still is, embraced by many adherents of the Churches of England and Rome; but these Churches rest their claims to men's interest and attachment not on the possession of such a scheme, but on other grounds with which we have for the present nothing to do. Puritanism's very reason for existing depends on the worth of this its vital conception, derived from St. Paul's writings; and when we are told that St. Paul is a Protestant doctor whose reign is ending, a Puritan, keen, pugnacious, and shutting up religion of the heart into theories of the brain about election and justification, we in England, at any rate, can best try the assertion by fixing our eyes on our own Puritans, and comparing their doctrine and their hold on vital truth with St. Paul's.

This we propose now to do, and, indeed, to do it will only be to complete what we have already begun. For already, when we were speaking of Hebraism and Hellenism,* we were led to remark how the over-Hebraizing of Puritanism, and its want of a wide culture, do so narrow its range and impair its vision that even the documents which it thinks all-sufficient, and to the study of which it exclusively rivets itself, it does not rightly understand, but is apt to make of them something quite different from what they really are. In short, no man, we said, who knows nothing else, knows even his Bible. And we showed how readers of the Bible attached to essential words and ideas of the Bible a sense which was not the writer's; and in particular how this had happened with regard to the Pauline doctrine of resurrection. Let us take the present opportunity of going further in the same road; and instead of lightly disparaging the great name of St. Paul, let us see if the needful thing is not rather to rescue St. Paul and the Bible from the perversions of them by mistaken men.

So long as the well-known habit, on which we have so often enlarged, prevails amongst our countrymen, of holding mechanically their ideas themselves, but making it their chief aim to work with energy and enthusiasm for the organizations which profess those ideas, English Puritanism is not likely to make such a return upon its own thoughts, and upon the elements of its being, as to accomplish for itself an operation of the kind needed; though it has men whose natural faculties, were they but free to use them, would undoubtedly prove equal to the task. The same habit

* See *Culture and Anarchy*, p. 176.

prevents our Puritans from being reached by philosophical works, which exist in sufficient numbers and of which Monsieur Reuss's history of the growth of Christian theology is an admirable specimen,—works where the entire scheme of Pauline doctrine is laid out with careful research and impartial accuracy. To give effect to the predominant points in Paul's teaching, and to exhibit these in so plain and popular a manner as to invite and almost compel all men's comprehension, is not the design of such works; and only by writings with this design in view will English Puritanism be reached. Our one qualification for the business in hand lies in that belief of ours, so much contested by our countrymen, of the primary needfulness of seeing things as they really are, and of the greater importance of ideas than of the machinery which exists for them. If by means of letting our consciousness play upon them freely, and by following the methods of studying and judging thence generated, we are shown that we ought in real truth neither to abase St. Paul and Puritanism together, as Monsieur Renan does, nor to abase St. Paul but exalt Puritanism, nor yet to exalt both Puritanism and St. Paul together, but rather to abase Puritanism and exalt St. Paul, then we cannot but think that even for Puritanism itself, also, it will be the best, however unpalatable, to be shown this. Puritanism certainly wishes well to St. Paul; it cannot wish to compromise him by an unintelligent adhesion to him and a blind adoption of his words, instead of being a true child to him. Yet this is what it has really done. What in St. Paul is secondary and subordinate, Puritanism has made primary and essential; what in St. Paul is figure and belongs to the sphere of feeling, Puritanism has transported into the sphere of intellect and made formula. On the other hand, what is with St. Paul primary, Puritanism has treated as subordinate: and what is with him thesis, and belonging (so far as anything in religion can properly be said thus to belong) to the sphere of intellect, Puritanism has made image and figure.

And first let us premise what we mean in this matter by primary and secondary, essential and subordinate. We mean, so far as the apostle is concerned, a greater or less approach to what really characterizes him and gives his teaching its originality and power. We mean, so far as truth is concerned, a greater or less agreement with facts which can be verified, and a greater or less power of explaining them. What essentially characterizes a religious teacher, and gives him his permanent worth and vitality, is, after all, just the scientific value of his teaching, its correspondence with important facts, and the light it throws on them. Never was the truth of this so apparent as now. The scientific sense in man never asserted its claims so strongly; the propensity of religion to neglect those claims, and the peril and loss to it from neglecting them, never were so manifest. The licence of affirmation about God and his proceedings, in which the religious world indulge, is more and more met by the demand for verification. When Calvinism tells us, "It is agreed between God and the

Mediator Jesus Christ, the Son of God, surety for the redeemed, as parties-contractors, that the sins of the redeemed should be imputed to innocent Christ; and he both condemned and put to death for them, upon this very condition, that whosoever heartily consents unto the covenant of reconciliation offered through Christ, shall, by the imputation of his obedience unto them, be justified and holden righteous before God;"—when Calvinism tells us this, is it not talking about God just as if he was a man in the next street, whose proceedings Calvinism intimately knew and could give account of, could verify that account at any moment, and enable us to verify it also? It is true, when the scientific sense in us, the sense which seeks exact knowledge, calls for that verification, Calvinism refers us to St. Paul, from whom it professes to have got this history of what it calls "the covenant of redemption." But this is only pushing the difficulty a stage further back. For if it is St. Paul, and not Calvinism, that professes this exact acquaintance with God and his doings, the scientific sense calls upon St. Paul to produce the facts by which he verifies what he says; and if he cannot produce them, then it treats both St. Paul's assertion, and Calvinism's assertion after him, as of no real consequence.

No one will deny that such is the behaviour of science towards religion in our day, though many may deplore it. And it is not that the scientific sense in us denies the rights of the poetic sense, which employs a figured and imaginative language. But the language we have just been quoting is not figurative and poetic language, it is scholastic and scientific language. Assertions in scientific language must stand the tests of scientific examination. Neither is it that the scientific sense in us refuses to admit willingly and reverently the name of God, as a point in which the religious and the scientific sense may meet, as the least inadequate name for that universal order which the intellect feels after as a law, and the heart feels after as a benefit. "We, too," might the men of science with truth say to the men of religion—"we, too, would gladly say *God*, if only, the moment one says *God*, you would not pester one with your pretensions of knowing all about him." That stream of tendency by which all things strive to fulfil the law of their being, and which, inasmuch as our idea of real welfare resolves itself into this fulfilment of the law of one's being, man rightly deems the fountain of all goodness, and calls by the worthiest and most solemn name he can, which is *God*, science also might willingly own for the fountain of all goodness, and call *God*. But however much more than this the heart may with propriety put into its language respecting *God*, this is as much as science can with strictness put there. Therefore, when the religious world, following its bent of trying to describe what it loves, amplifying and again amplifying its description, and guarding finally this amplified description by the most precise and rigid terms it can find, comes at last, with the best intentions, to the notion of a sort of magnified and non-natural man, who proceeds in the fashion laid down in the Calvinistic thesis we have quoted, then science strikes in, remarks the

difference between this second notion and the notion it originally admitted, and demands to have the new notion verified, as the first can be verified, by facts. But this does not unsettle the first notion, or prevent science from acknowledging the importance and the scientific validity of propositions which are grounded upon the first notion, and shed light over it.

Nevertheless, researches in this sphere are now a good deal eclipsed in popularity by researches in the sphere of physics, and no longer have the vogue which they once had. I have related how an eminent physicist with whose acquaintance I am honoured, imagines me to have invented the author of the *Sacra Privata*; and that fashionable newspaper, the *Morning Post*, undertaking—as I seemed, it said, very anxious about the matter—to supply information as to who the author really was, laid it down that he was Bishop of Calcutta, and that his ideas and writings, to which I attached so much value, had been among the main provocatives of the Indian mutiny. Therefore it is perhaps expedient to refresh our memory as to these schemes of doctrine, Calvinistic or Arminian, for the upholding of which, as has been said, British Puritanism exists, before we proceed to compare them, for correspondence with facts and for scientific validity, with the teaching of St. Paul.

Calvinism, then, begins by laying down that God from all eternity decreed whatever was to come to pass in time; that by his decree a certain number of angels and men are predestinated, out of God's mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works in them, to everlasting life; and others foreordained, according to the unsearchable counsel of his will, whereby he extends or withholds mercy as he pleases, to everlasting death. God made, however, our first parents, Adam and Eve, upright and able to keep his law, which was written in their hearts; at the same time entering into a contract with them, and with their posterity as represented in them, by which they were assured of everlasting life in return for perfect obedience, and of everlasting death if they should be disobedient. Our first parents, being enticed by Satan, a fallen angel speaking in the form of a serpent, broke this covenant of works, as it is called, by eating the forbidden fruit; and hereby they, and their posterity in them and with them, became not only liable to eternal death, but lost also their natural uprightness and all ability to please God; nay, they became by nature enemies to God and to all spiritual good, and inclined only to evil continually. This, says Calvinism, is our original sin; the bitter root of all our actual transgressions, in thought, word, and deed.

Yet, though man has neither power nor inclination to rise out of this wretched fallen state, but is rather disposed to lie insensible in it till he perish, another covenant exists by which his condition is greatly affected. This is the covenant of redemption, made and agreed upon, says Calvinism, between God the Father and God the Son in the Council of the Trinity before the world began. The sum of the covenant of redemption is this:

God having, by the eternal decree already mentioned, freely chosen to life a certain number of lost mankind, gave them before the world began to God the Son, appointed Redeemer, on condition that if he humbled himself so far as to assume the human nature in union with the divine nature, submit himself to the law as surety for the elect, and satisfy justice for them by giving obedience in their name, even to suffering the cursed death of the cross, he should ransom and redeem them from sin and death, and purchase for them righteousness and eternal life. The Son of God accepted the condition, or bargain as Calvinism calls it; and in the fulness of time came, as Jesus Christ, into the world, was born of the Virgin Mary, subjected himself to the law, and completely paid the due ransom on the cross.

God has in his word, the Bible, revealed to man this covenant of grace or redemption. All those whom he has predestined to life he in his own time effectually calls to be partakers in the release offered. Man is altogether passive in this call, until the Holy Spirit enables him to answer it. The Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, applies to the elect the redemption purchased by Christ, through working faith in them. As soon as the elect have faith in Jesus Christ, that is, as soon as they give their consent heartily and repentantly, in the sense of deserved condemnation, to the covenant of grace, God justifies them by imputing to them that perfect obedience which Christ gave to the law, and the satisfaction also which upon the cross Christ gave to justice in their name. They who are thus called and justified are by the same power likewise sanctified; the dominion of carnal lusts being destroyed in them, and the practice of holiness being, in spite of some remnants of corruption, put in their power. Good works, done in obedience to God's moral law, are the fruits and evidences of a true faith; and the persons of the faithful elect being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him and rewarded. But works done by other and unregenerate men, though they may be things which God commands, cannot please God and are sinful. The elect can after justification and sanctification no more fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end and be eternally saved; and of this they may, even in the present life, have the certain assurance. Finally, after death, their souls and bodies are joyfully joined together again in the resurrection, and they remain thenceforth for ever with Christ in glory; while all the wicked are sent away into hell with Satan, whom they have served.

We have here set down the main doctrines of Calvinistic Puritanism almost entirely in words of its own choosing. It is not necessary to enter into distinctions such as those between sublapsarians and supralapsarians, between Calvinists who believe that God's decree of election and reprobation was passed in foresight of original sin and on account of it, and Calvinists who believe that it was passed absolutely and independently. The important points of Calvinism—original sin, free election, effectual calling,

justification through imputed righteousness—are common to both. The passiveness of man, the activity of God, are the great features in this scheme; there is very little of what man does, very much of what God does; and what God does is described with such particularity that the figure we have used of the man in the next street cannot but recur strongly to our minds. The positive Protestantism of Puritanism, with which we are here concerned, as distinguished from the negative Protestantism of the Church of England, has nourished itself with ardour on this scheme of doctrine. It informs and fashions the whole religion of Scotland, established and nonconforming. It is the doctrine which Puritan flocks delight to hear from their ministers. It was Puritanism's constant reproach against the Church of England, that this essential doctrine was not firmly enough held and set forth by her. At the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, in the committee of divines appointed by the House of Lords in 1641, and again at the Savoy Conference in 1661, the reproach regularly appeared. "Some have defended," is the Puritan complaint, "the whole gross substance of Arminianism, that the act of conversion depends upon the concurrence of man's free will; some do teach and preach that good works are concourses with faith in the act of justification; some have defended universal grace, some have absolutely denied original sin." As Puritanism grew, the Calvinistic scheme of doctrine hardened and became stricter; of the Calvinistic confessions of faith of the sixteenth century,—the Helvetic Confession, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism,—the Calvinism is so moderate as to astonish any one who has been used only to its later developments. Even the much abused canons of the Synod of Dort no one can read attentively through without finding in parts of them a genuine movement of thought,—sometimes even a philosophic depth,—and a powerful religious feeling. In the documents of the Westminster Assembly, twenty-five years later, this has disappeared; and what we call the British Philistine stands in his religious capacity, sheer and stark, before us. Seriousness is the one merit of these documents, but it is a seriousness too mixed with the alloy of mundane strife and hatred to be called a religious feeling; not a trace of delicacy of perception, or of philosophic thinking; the mere rigidness and contentiousness of the controversialist and political dissenter; a Calvinism exaggerated till it is simply repelling; and to complete the whole, a machinery of covenants, conditions, bargains, and parties-contractors, such as could have proceeded from no one but the born Anglo-Saxon man of business, British or American.

However, a scheme of doctrine is not necessarily false because of the style in which its adherents may have at a particular moment enounced it. From the faults which disfigure the performance of the Westminster divines the profession of faith prefixed to the Congregational *Year-Book* is free. The Congregationalists form one of the two great divisions of English Puritans. "Congregational churches believe," their *Year-Book* tells us, "that the first man disobeyed the divine command, fell from his

state of innocence and purity, and involved all his posterity in the consequences of that fall. They believe that all who will be saved were the objects of God's eternal and electing love, and were given by an act of divine sovereignty to the Son of God. They believe that Christ meritoriously obtained eternal redemption for us, and that the Holy Spirit is given in consequence of Christ's mediation." The essential points of Calvinism are all here. To this profession of faith, annually published in the *Year-Book* of the Independents, subscription is not required; Puritanism thus remaining honourably consistent with the protests which, at the Restoration, it made against the call for subscription. But the authors of the *Year-Book* say with pride, and it is a common boast of the Independent churches, that though they do not require subscription, there is, perhaps, in no religious body, such firm and general agreement in doctrine as among Congregationalists. This is true, and it is even more true of the flocks than of the ministers, of whom the abler and the younger begin to be lifted by the stream of modern ideas. Still, up to the present time, the Protestantism of one great division of English Puritans is undoubtedly Calvinist; the Baptists holding in general the scheme of Calvinism yet more strictly than the Independents.

The other great division of English Puritanism is formed by the Methodists. Wesleyan Methodism is, as is well known, not Calvinist but Arminian. The *Methodist Magazine* was called by Wesley the *Arminian Magazine*, and kept that title all through his life. Arminianism is an attempt made with the best intentions, and with much truth of practical sense, but not in a very profound philosophical spirit, to escape from what perplexes and shocks us in Calvinism. The God of Calvinism is a magnified and non-natural man who decrees at his mere good pleasure some men to salvation and other men to reprobation; the God of Arminianism is a magnified and non-natural man who foreknows the course of each man's life, and who decrees each of us to salvation or reprobation in accordance with this foreknowledge. But so long as we remain in this anthropomorphic order of ideas the question will always occur: Why did not a being of infinite power and infinite love so make all men as that there should be no cause for this sad foreknowledge and sad decree respecting a number of them? In truth, Calvinism is both theologically more coherent, and also shows a deeper sense of reality than Arminianism, which, in the practical man's fashion, is apt to scrape the surface of things only. For instance, the Arminian Remonstrants, in their zeal to justify the morality, in a human sense, of God's ways, maintained that he sent his word to one nation rather than another according as he saw that one nation was more worthy than another of such a preference. The Calvinist doctors of the Synod of Dort have no difficulty in showing that Moses and Christ both of them assert, with respect to the Jewish nation, the direct contrary; and not only do they here obtain a theological triumph, but in rebutting the Arminian theory they are in accordance with historical truth and with the real march of human affairs. The Calvinists seize the fact

here, while the Arminians miss it. The Calvinist's fault is in his scientific appreciation of the fact; in the reasons he gives for it. God, he says, sends his word to one nation rather than another *at his mere good pleasure*. Here we have again the magnified and non-natural man, who likes and dislikes, knows and decrees just as a man, only on a scale immensely transcending anything of which we have experience; and whose proceedings we nevertheless describe as if he were in the next street, for people to verify all we say about him.

Arminian Methodism, however, puts aside the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. The foremost place, which in the Calvinist scheme belongs to the doctrine of predestination, belongs in the Methodist scheme to the doctrine of justification by faith. More and more prominently does modern Methodism elevate this as its essential doctrine; and the era in their founder's life which Methodists select to celebrate is the era of his conversion to it. It is the doctrine of Anselm, adopted and developed by Luther, set forth in the Confession of Augsburg, and current all through the popular theology of our day. We shall find it in almost any popular hymn we happen to take, but the following lines of Milton exhibit it classically. By the fall of our first parents, says he,—

Man, losing all,
To expiate his treason hath nought left,
But to destruction sacred and devote
He with his whole posterity must die;
Die he or justice must; unless for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction; death for death.

By Adam's fall, God's justice and mercy were placed in conflict. God could not follow his mercy without violating his justice. Christ by his satisfaction gave the Father the right and power (*nudum jus Patri acquirebat*, said the Arminians) to follow his mercy, and to make with man the covenant of free justification by faith, whereby, if a man has a sure trust and confidence that his sins are forgiven him in virtue of the satisfaction made to God for them by the death of Christ, he is held clear of sin by God, and admitted to salvation. This doctrine, like the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, involves a whole history of God's proceedings, and gives, also, first and almost sole place to what God does, with disregard to what man does. It has thus an essential affinity with Calvinism; indeed, Calvinism is but this doctrine of original sin and justification, *plus* the doctrine of predestination; nay, the Welsh Methodists, as is well known, have no difficulty in combining the tenet of election with the practices and most of the tenets of Methodism. The word *solifidian* points precisely to that which is common to both Calvinism and Methodism, and which has made both these halves of English Puritanism so popular,—their *sensational* side, as it may be called, their laying all stress on what God wondrously gives and works for us, not on what we bring or do for ourselves. "Plead thou singly," says

Wesley, "the blood of the covenant, the ransom paid for thy proud stubborn soul." Wesley's doctrines of conversion, of the new birth, of sanctification, of the direct witness of the spirit, of assurance, of sinless perfection, all of them thus correspond with doctrines which we have noticed in Calvinism, and show a common character with them. The instantaneousness Wesley loved to ascribe to conversion and sanctification points all the same way. "God gives in a moment such a faith in the blood of his Son as translates us out of darkness into light, out of sin and fear into holiness and happiness." And again, "Look for sanctification just as you are, as a poor sinner that has nothing to pay, nothing to plead but *Christ died*." This is the side in Wesley's teaching which his followers have above all seized, and which they are eager to hold forth as the essential part of his legacy to them.

It is true that from the same reason which prevents, as we have said, those who know their Bible and nothing else from really knowing even their Bible, Methodists, who for the most part know nothing but Wesley, do not really know even Wesley. It is true that what really characterizes this most interesting and most attractive man, is not his doctrine of justification by faith, or any other of his set doctrines, but is entirely what we may call his *genius for godliness*. Mr. Alexander Knox, in his remarks on his friend's life and character, insists much on an entry in Wesley's Journal in 1767, where he seems impatient at the endless harping on the tenet of justification, and asks "if it is not high time to return to the plain word: 'He that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.'" Mr. Knox is right in thinking that the feeling which made Wesley say this is what gave him his vital worth and character as a man; but it is not what gives him his character as the teacher of Methodism. Methodism rejects Mr. Knox's version of its founder, and insists on making the article of justification the very corner-stone of the Wesleyan edifice. And the truth undoubtedly is, that not by his assertion of what man brings, but by his assertion of what God gives, by his doctrines of conversion, instantaneous justification and sanctification, assurance, and sinless perfection, does Wesley live and operate in Methodism. "You think, I must first be or do thus or thus (for sanctification). Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it as you are; then expect it now. It is of importance to observe that there is an inseparable connection between these three points: expect it *by faith*, expect it *as you are*, and expect it *now*. To deny one of them is to deny them all; to allow one is to allow them all." This is the teaching of Wesley, which has made the great Methodist half of English Puritanism what it is, and not his hesitations and recoils at the dangers of his own teaching. No doubt, as the seriousness of Calvinism, its perpetual conversation with deep matters and with the Bible, have given force and fervency to Calvinist Puritans, so the loveliness of Wesley's character, and what we have called his *genius for godliness*, have sweetened and

made amiable numberless lives of Methodist Puritans. But as a religious teacher, Wesley is to be judged by his doctrine ; and his doctrine, like the Calvinistic scheme, rests with all its weight on the assertion of certain supposed proceedings on God's part, independent of us, our experience, and our will ; and leads its recipients to look, in religion, not so much for an arduous progress on their own part, and the exercise of their activity, as for strokes of magic, and what may be called a sensational character.

In the Heidelberg Catechism, after an answer in which the catechist rehearses the popularly received doctrine of original sin and vicarious satisfaction for it, the catechiser asks the pertinent question : “ *Unde id scis ?* ”—how do you know all that ? The Apostle Paul is, as we have already shown, the great authority for it whom formal theology invokes ; his name is used by popular theology with the same confidence. I open a modern book of popular religion at the account of a visit paid to a hardened criminal seized with terror the night before his execution. The visitor says : “ *I now stand in Paul's place*, and say : In Christ's stead we pray you, be ye reconciled to God. I beg you to accept the pardon of all your sins, which Christ has purchased for you, and which God freely bestows on you for his sake. If you do not understand, I say : God's ways are not as our ways.” And the narrative goes on : “ That night was spent in singing the praises of the Saviour who had purchased his pardon.” Both Calvinism and Methodism appeal to the Bible, and, above all, to St. Paul, for this history they propound of the relations between God and man ; but Calvinism relies most, in enforcing it, on man's fears, Methodism on man's hopes. Calvinism insists on man's being under a curse ; it then works the sense of sin, misery, and terror in him, and appeals pre-eminently to the desire to flee from the wrath to come. Methodism, too, insists on his being under a curse ; but it works most the sense of hope in him, the craving for happiness, and appeals pre-eminently to the desire for eternal bliss. No one, however, will maintain that the particular account of God's proceedings with man, whereby Methodism and Calvinism operate on these desires, proves itself by internal evidence, and establishes without external aid its own scientific validity. So we may either directly try, as best we can, its scientific validity in itself, or, as it professes to have Paul's authority to support it, we may first inquire what is really Paul's account of God's proceedings with man, and whether this tallies with the Puritan account and confirms it. The latter is in every way the safer and the more instructive course to follow. And we will follow Puritanism's example in taking St. Paul's mature and greatest work, the Epistle to the Romans, as the chief place for finding what he really thought on the points in question.

We have already said elsewhere,* indeed, what is very true, and what must never be forgotten, that what St. Paul, a man so separated from us

* See *Culture and Anarchy*, p. 178

by time, race, training, and circumstances, really thought, we cannot make sure of knowing exactly. All we can do is to get near it, reading him with the sort of critical tact which the study of the human mind and its history, and the acquaintance with many great writers, naturally gives for following the movement of any one single great writer's thought ; reading him, also, without preconceived theories to which we want to make his thoughts fit themselves. It is evident that the English translation of the Epistle to the Romans has been made by men with their heads full of the current doctrines of election and justification we have been noticing ; and it has thereby received such a bias—of which a strong example is the use of the word *atonement* in the eleventh verse of the fifth chapter—that perhaps it is almost impossible for any one who reads the English translation only, to take into his mind Paul's thought without a colouring from the current doctrines. But besides discarding the English translation, we must bear in mind, if we wish to 'get as near Paul's real thought as possible, two things which have greatly increased the facilities for misrepresenting him. In the first place, Paul, like the other Bible writers, and like the Semitic race in general, has a much juster sense of the true scope and limits of diction in religious deliverances than we have. He uses within the sphere of religious emotion expressions which, in this sphere, have an eloquence and a propriety, but which are not to be taken out of it and made into formal scientific propositions. We have used the word *Hebraize* for another purpose, to denote the exclusive attention to the moral side of our nature, to conscience, and to doing rather than knowing ; so, to describe the vivid and figured way in which St. Paul, within the sphere of religious emotion, uses words, without carrying them outside it, we will use the word *Orientalize*. When Paul says : "God hath concluded them all in unbelief *that he might* have mercy upon all," he Orientalizes ; that is, he does not mean to assert formally that God acted with this set design, but, being full of the happy and divine end to the unbelief spoken of, he, by a vivid and striking figure, represents the unbelief as actually caused with a view to this end. But when the Calvinists of the Synod of Dort, wishing to establish the formal proposition that faith and all saving gifts flow from election and nothing else, quote an expression of Paul's similar to the one we have quoted, "He hath chosen us," they say, not because we were, but "*that we might* be holy and without blame before him," they go quite wide of the mark, from not perceiving that what the apostle used as a vivid figure of rhetoric, they are using as a formal scientific proposition.

When Paul Orientalizes, the fault is not with him when he is misunderstood, but with the prosaic and unintelligent western readers who have not enough tact for style to comprehend his mode of expression. But he also *Judaizes* ; and here his liability to being misunderstood by us western people is undoubtedly due to a defect in the critical habit of himself and his race. A Jew himself, he uses the Jewish Scriptures in a Jew's arbitrary and uncritical fashion, as if they had a talismanic

character ; as if for a doctrine, however true in itself, their confirmation was still necessary, and as if this confirmation was to be got from their mere words alone, however detached from the sense of their context, and however violently allegorized or otherwise wrested. To use the Bible in this way, even for purposes of illustration, is often an interruption to the argument, a fault of style ; to use it in this way for real proof and confirmation, is a fault of reasoning. An example of the first fault may be seen in the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in the beginning of the third chapter ; the apostle's point in either place, —his point that faith comes by hearing, and his point that God's oracles were true though the Jews did not believe them,—would stand much clearer without their scaffolding of Bible quotation. An instance of the second fault is in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, where the Biblical argumentation by which the apostle seeks to prove his case is as unsound as his case itself is sound. How far these faults are due to the apostle himself, how far to the requirements of those for whom he wrote, we need not now investigate. It is enough that he undoubtedly uses the letter of Scripture in this arbitrary and Jewish way ; and thus Puritanism, which has only itself to blame for misunderstanding him when he Orientalizes, may fairly put upon the apostle himself some of its blame for misunderstanding him when he Judaizes, and for Judaizing so strenuously along with him.

To get, therefore, at what Paul really thought and meant to say, it is necessary for us modern and western people to translate him. And not as Puritanism, which has merely taken his letter and recast it in the formal propositions of a modern scientific treatise ; but his letter itself must be recast before it can be properly conveyed by such propositions. And as the order in which, in any series of ideas, the ideas come, is of great importance to the final result, and as Paul, who did not write scientific treatises, but had always religious edification in direct view, never set out his doctrine with a design of exhibiting it as a scientific whole, we must also find out for ourselves the order in which Paul's ideas naturally stand, and the connection between one of them and the other, in order to arrive at the real scheme of his teaching, as compared with the schemes exhibited by Puritanism.

We remarked how what sets the Calvinist in motion seems to be the desire to flee from the wrath to come ; and what sets the Methodist in motion, the desire for eternal bliss. What is it which sets Paul in motion ? It is the impulse which we have elsewhere noted as the master-impulse of Hebraism — *the desire for righteousness*. To the Hebrew, this moral order, or righteousness, was pre-eminently the universal order, the law of God ; and God, the fountain of all goodness, was pre-eminently to him the giver of the moral law. The end and aim of all religion,—access to God—the sense of harmony with the universal order—the partaking of the divine nature—that our faith and hope might be in God—that we might have life and have it more abundantly,—meant,

for the Hebrew, access to the source of the eternal statutes of the moral order in especial, and harmony with it. It was the greatness of the Hebrew race that it felt the authority of this order, its preciousness and its beneficence, so strongly. "The law of thy mouth is better than thousands of gold and silver." It was the greatness of their best individuals that in them this feeling was incessantly urgent to prove itself in the only sure manner—in action. "Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and *keep* it." "If thou wouldest enter into life, *keep* the commandments." "Let no man deceive you, he that *doeth* righteousness is righteous." What distinguishes Paul is both his conviction that the commandment is holy, and just, and good; and also his desire to give effect to the commandment, to *establish* it. It was this which gave him insight to see that there could be no radical difference in respect of salvation and the way to it between Jew and Gentile: "Upon every soul of man that *worketh evil*, whoever he may be, tribulation and anguish; to every one that *worketh good*, glory, honour, and peace!" His piercing practical religious sense, joined to his deep intellectual power, enabled him to discern and follow the range of the commandment, both as to man's actions and as to his heart and thoughts, with extraordinary force and closeness. His religion had, as we shall see, a preponderantly mystic side, and nothing is so natural to the mystic as in rich single words, such as faith, light, love, to sum up and take for granted, without specially enumerating them, all good moral principles and habits; yet nothing is more remarkable in Paul than the frequent, nay, incessant lists, in the most particular detail, of moral habits to be pursued or avoided. Lists of this sort might in a less sincere and profound writer be formal and wearisome; but to no attentive reader of St. Paul will they be wearisome, for in making them he touched the solid ground which was the basis of his religion—the solid ground of his hearty desire for righteousness and of his thorough conception of it—and only on such a ground was so strong a superstructure possible. The more one studies these lists, the more does their significance come out. To illustrate this, let any one go through for himself the enumeration, too long to be quoted here, in the four last verses of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, of "things which are not convenient;" or let him merely consider with attention this catalogue, towards the end of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, of fruits of the spirit: "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." The man who wrote with this searching minuteness knew accurately what he meant by sin and righteousness, and did not use these words at random. His diligent comprehensiveness in his plan of duties is only less admirable than his diligent sincerity. The sterner virtues and the gentler, his conscience will not let him rest till he has embraced them all. In his deep resolve "to make out by actual trial what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God," he goes back upon himself again and again, he marks a duty at every point of our nature, and at

points the most opposite, for fear he should by possibility be leaving behind him some weakness still indulged, some subtle promptings to evil not yet brought into captivity.

It has not been enough remarked how this incomparable honesty and depth in Paul's love of righteousness is probably what chiefly explains his conversion. Most men have the defects, as the saying is, of their qualities; because they are ardent and severe they have no sense for gentleness and sweetness; because they are sweet and gentle they have no sense for severity and ardour. A Puritan is a Puritan, and a man of feeling is a man of feeling. But with Paul the very same fulness of moral nature which made him an ardent Pharisee, "as concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless," was so large that it carried him out of Pharisaism and beyond it, when once he found how much needed doing in him which Pharisaism could not do. Every attentive regarer of the character of Paul, not only as he was before his conversion but as he appears to us till his end, must have been struck with two things: one, the earnest insistence with which he recommends "bowels of mercies," as he calls them, meekness, humbleness of mind, gentleness, unwearying forbearance, crowned all of them with that emotion of charity "which is the bond of perfectness;" the other, the force with which he dwells on the *solidarity* (to use the modern phrase) of man,—the joint interest, that is, which binds humanity together, the duty of respecting every one's part in it, and of doing justice to his efforts to fulfil that part. Never surely did such a controversialist, such a master of sarcasm and invective, commend, with such manifest sincerity and such persuasive emotion, the qualities of meekness and gentleness! Never surely did a worker, who took with such energy his own line, and who was so born to preponderate and predominate in whatever line he took, insist so often and so admirably that the lines of other workers were just as good as his own! At no time, perhaps, did Paul arrive at practising quite perfectly what he thus preached; but this only sets in stronger light the thorough love of righteousness which made him seek out, and put so prominently forward, and so strive to make himself and others fulfil, parts of righteousness which do not force themselves on the common conscience like the duties of soberness, temperance, and activity, and which were somewhat alien, certainly, to his own particular nature. Therefore we cannot but believe that into this spirit, so possessed with the hunger and thirst for righteousness, and precisely because it was so possessed by it, the characteristic doctrines of Christ which brought a new aliment to feed this hunger and thirst of Christ, whom he had never seen but who was in every one's words and thoughts—the teacher who was meek and lowly in heart, who said men were brothers and must love one another, that the last should often be first, that the exercise of dominion and lordship had nothing in them desirable, and that we must become as little children—sank down and worked there even before Paul

ceased to persecute, and had no small part in getting him ready for the crisis of his conversion.

Such doctrines offered new fields of righteousness to the eyes of this indefatigable explorer of it, and enlarged the domain of duty of which Pharisaism showed him only a portion. Then, after the satisfaction thus given to his desire for a full conception of righteousness, came Christ's injunctions to make clean the inside as well as the outside, to beware of the least leaven of hypocrisy and self-flattery, of saying and not doing ;—and, finally, the injunction to feel, after doing all we can, that, as compared with the standard of perfection, we are still unprofitable servants. These teachings were, to a man like Paul, for the practice of righteousness what the others were for the theory ;—sympathetic utterances, which made the inmost chords of his being vibrate, and which irresistibly drew him sooner or later towards their utterer. Need it be said that he never forgot them, and that in all his pages they have left their trace ? Is it not even affecting to see, how, when he is driven for the very sake of righteousness to put the law of righteousness in the second place, and to seek outside the law itself for a power to fulfil the law, how, I say, he returns again and again to the elucidation of his one sole design in all he is doing ; how he labours to prevent all possibility of misunderstanding, and to show that he is only leaving the moral law for a moment in order to establish it for ever more victoriously. "Do I condemn the law ?" he keeps saying ; "do I forget that the commandment is holy, just, and good ? Because we are no longer under the law, are we to sin ? Am I seeking to make the course of my life and yours other than a service and an obedience ?" This man, out of whom an astounding criticism has deduced Antinomianism, is in truth so possessed with horror of Antinomianism, that he goes to grace for the sole purpose of extirpating it, and even then cannot rest without perpetually telling us why he is gone there. This man, whom Calvin and Luther and their followers have shut up into the two scholastic doctrines of election and justification, would have said, could we hear him, just what he said about circumcision and uncircumcision in his own day : "Election is nothing, and justification is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God."

This foremost place which righteousness takes in the order of St. Paul's ideas makes a signal difference between him and Puritanism. Puritanism, as we have said, finds its starting-point either in the desire to flee from eternal wrath or in the desire to obtain eternal bliss. Puritanism has learned from revelation, as it says, a particular history of the first man's fall, of mankind being under a curse, of certain contracts having been passed concerning mankind in the Council of the Trinity, of the substance of those contracts, and of man's position under them. The great concern of Puritanism is with the operation of those contracts on man's condition ; its leading thought, if it is a Puritanism of a gloomy turn, is of awe and fear caused by the threatening aspect of man's condition under these contracts ; if of a cheerful turn, of gratitude and hope

caused by the favourable aspect of it. But in either case, foregone events, the covenant passed, what God has done and does, is the great matter ; what there is left for man to do, the human work of righteousness, is secondary, and comes in but to attest and confirm our assurance of what God has done for us. We have seen this in Wesley's words already quoted : the first thing for a man is to be justified and sanctified, and to have the assurance that, without seeking it by works, he is justified and sanctified ; then the desire and works of righteousness follow as a proper result of this condition. Still more does Calvinism make man's desire and works of righteousness mere evidences and 'benefits of more important things ; the desire to work righteousness is among the saving graces applied by the Holy Spirit to the elect, and the last of those graces. *Denique*, says the Synod of Dort, *last of all*, after faith in the promises and after the witness of the Spirit, comes, to establish our assurance, a clear conscience and righteousness. It is manifest how unlike is this order of ideas to Paul's order, who starts with the thought of righteousness, and builds upon that thought his whole system.

But this difference constitutes from the very outset an immense scientific superiority for the scheme of Paul. Hope and fear are elements of human nature like the love of right, but they are far blinder and less scientific elements of it. "The Bible is a divine revelation ; the Bible declares certain things ; the things it thus declares move our hopes and fears ;"—this is the line of thought followed by Puritanism. But what science pursues is a more satisfying, rational conception of things than we had before ; what fails to give this, what gives the contrary of this, may indeed be of a nature to move hope and fear, but is to science of none the more value on that account. Instead of covering the scientific inadequacy of a conception by the authority of a revelation, science rather proves the authority of a revelation by the scientific adequacy of the conceptions given in it, and limits the sphere of that authority to the sphere of that adequacy. The more an alleged revelation seems to contain precious and striking things, the more will science be inclined to doubt the correctness of any deduction which draws from it, within the sphere of these things, a conception which rationally is not satisfying. That the scheme of Puritanism is rationally so little satisfying inclines science, not to take it on the authority of the Bible, but to doubt whether it is really in the Bible. The first appeal which this scheme, having begun outside the sphere of reality and experience, makes in the sphere of reality and experience—its first appeal, therefore, to science—the appeal to the witness of human hope and fear, does not much mend matters ; for science knows that numberless conceptions not rationally satisfying are yet the ground of hope and fear. Paul does not begin outside the sphere of science ; he begins with an appeal to reality and experience. And the appeal here with which he commences has, for science, undoubted force and importance ; for he appeals to a rational conception which is a part, and perhaps the chief part, of

our experience ; the conception of the law of *righteousness*, the very law and ground of human nature, so far as this nature is moral. Things as they truly are—facts—are the object-matter of science ; and the moral law in human nature is among the greatest of facts. If I were not afraid of intruding upon Mr. Ruskin's province, I might point out the witness which etymology itself bears to this law as a prime element and clue in man's constitution. Our word righteousness means going straight, going the way we are meant to go ; there are languages in which the word *way* or *road* is also the word for right reason and duty ; the Greek word for justice and righteousness has for its foundation, probably, the idea of describing a certain line, following a certain necessary orbit. But for these fanciful helps there is no need. When Paul starts with affirming the grandeur and necessity of the law of righteousness, science has no difficulty in going along with him. When he fixes as man's right aim, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control," he appeals for witness to the truth of what he says to an experience too intimate to need illustration or argument. The best confirmation of the scientific validity of the importance which Paul thus attaches to the law of righteousness, God's moral law, the law of reason and conscience, is to be found in its agreement with the importance attached to this law by teachers the most unlike him ; since in the eye of science an experience gains as much by having universality, as in the eye of religion it seems to gain by having uniqueness. "Would you know," says Epictetus, "the means to perfection which Socrates followed ? they were these : in every single matter which came before him he made the rule of reason and conscience his one rule to follow." Such was precisely the aim of Paul also ; it is an aim to which science does homage as a satisfying rational conception. And to this aim hope and fear properly attach themselves ; for on our following the clue of moral order or losing it, depend our happiness or misery ; our life or death in the true sense of those words, our harmony with the universal order or our disharmony with it, our partaking, as St. Paul says, of the wrath of God or of the glory of God. So that looking to this clue, and fearing to lose hold on it, we may truly say with the author of the "*Imitation* : " *Omnia vanitas, prater amare Deum, et illi soli servire.*

But to serve God, to follow that central clue in our moral being which unites us to the universal order, is no easy task ; and here again we are on the most sure ground of experience and psychology. In some way or other, says Bishop Wilson, every man is conscious of an opposition in him between the flesh and the spirit. *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor,* say the thousand times quoted lines of the Roman poet. The philosophical explanation of this conflict does not indeed attribute, like the Manichean fancy, any inherent evil to the flesh and its workings ; all the forces and tendencies in us are, like our proper central moral tendency the desire of righteousness, in themselves beneficent ; but they require to be harmonized with this tendency, because this aims directly at our total welfare,

our harmony with the law of our nature and the law of God, and derives thence a pre-eminence and a right to moderate. But though not evil in themselves, the evil which flows from these workings is undeniable. The lusts of the flesh, the law in our members, *passion*, according to the Greek word used by Paul, *inordinate affection*, according to the admirable rendering of Paul's Greek word in our English Bible, take naturally no account of anything but themselves; this arbitrary and unregulated action of theirs can produce only confusion and misery. The spirit, the law of our mind, takes account of the universal order, the will of God, and is indeed the voice of that order expressing itself in us. Paul talks of a man sowing to *his* flesh, because each of us has of his own this individual body, this congeries of flesh and bones, blood and nerves, different from that of every one else, and with desires and impulses driving each of us his own separate way; and he says that a man who sows to this sows to a thousand tyrants, and can reap no worthy harvest. But he talks of sowing to *the spirit*, because there is one central tendency, which for us and for all men is the law of our being; and through reason and righteousness we move in the universal order and with it. In this conformity to the will of God is our peace and happiness.

But how to find the energy and power to bring all these self-seeking tendencies of the flesh, these multitudinous, swarming, eager, and incessant impulses, into obedience to the central tendency? Mere commanding and forbidding is of no avail, and only irritates opposition in the desires it tries to control. It even enlarges their power, because it makes us feel our impotence; and the confusion caused by their ungoverned working is increased by our being filled with a deepened sense of dis-harmony, remorse, and dismay. "I was alive without the law once," says Paul; the natural play of all the forces and desires in me went on smoothly enough so long as I did not attempt to introduce order and regulation among them. That natural law of reason and conscience which all men have, was sufficient by itself to produce a consciousness of rebellion and disquietude. Matters became only worse by the exhibition of the Mosaic law, the offspring of a moral sense keener and stricter than that of the mass of mankind. Its very stringency increased the feeling of dismay and helplessness; it set forth the law of righteousness clearly, yet did not supply any sufficient power to keep it. Neither the law of nature nor the law of Moses availed to bind men to righteousness. So we come to the word which is the governing word of the Epistle to the Romans—the word *all*. As the word *righteousness* is the governing word of St. Paul's entire mind and life, so the word *all* is the governing word of this his chief epistle. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." All do what they would not, and do not what they would; all feel themselves enslaved, impotent, and miserable. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Hitherto, we have followed Paul in the sphere of morals; we have

now come with him to the point where he enters the sphere of religion. Religion is that which binds and holds us to the practice of righteousness. We have accompanied Paul, and found him always treading solid ground, till he is brought to straits where a binding and holding power of this kind is necessary. Here is the critical point for the scientific worth of his doctrine. "Now at last," cries Puritanism, "the great apostle is about to become even as one of us; there is no issue for him now, but the issue we have always declared he finds. He has recourse to our theurgy of election, substitution, vicarious satisfaction, and imputed righteousness." We will proceed to show that Paul has recourse to nothing of the kind.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

The first and Last Kiss.

Thy lips are quiet and thine eyes are still,
Cold, colourless and sad thy placid face,
Thy form has only now the statue's grace ;
My words wake not thy voicee, nor can they fill
Thine eyes with light. Before fate's mighty will
Our wills must bow ; yet for a little space
I sit with thee and Death in this lone place,
And hold thy hands that are so white and chill.
I always lov'd thee, which thou didst not know,
Though well he knew whose wedded love thou wert ;
Now thou art dead I may raise up the fold
That hides thy face, and, by thee bending low,
For the first time and last before we part,
Kiss the curv'd lips—calm, beautiful and cold.

PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON.

The Catalan Rover—Roger De Flor.

He is seldom heard of now; but when the centuries were entering their teens fame had no greater favourite than the Catalan admiral, Roger de Flor. And well he merited the distinction, being in all respects the first of the condottieri. He was, however, a Catalan only by adoption. The Emperor Frederick II. had a favourite falconer, Richard Blum. This gentleman he united, in his last Italian expedition, to an heiress of Brindisi. Nor did the fortunes of the falconer pause here. He received in gift so many forfeited estates, that he became one of the wealthiest barons of the province. There, too, his good German name underwent a transformation of a kind very usual in those days. Richard Blum was understood by the Brindisians to mean Blooming Richard, and all the more readily since the owner of the name was a large and very handsome blond. Now the Apulian of *Richard* was and is *Roger*, and *blooming* is the same as *flowery* all the world over. And thus it happened that Richard Blum, or Blooming Richard, was turned into Flowery Roger—that is to say, Roger de Flor.

The whilom falconer was duly grateful to his benefactor and attached himself unwaveringly to his dynasty. Its sun, however, was nearly set. Charles of Anjou commenced his red career a few years later, and Blum or De Flor, fighting valiantly for Conradin, was slain with many another at Scortocula, August 28, 1268; leaving behind him a widow and two sons, the younger, Roger, being then scarce a year old. "Woe to the vanquished," was ever the maxim of Charles, and here he carried it out relentlessly. Legal butchery and confiscation supplemented the victory, until Conradin and his party were exterminated. Among the multitude thus reduced to penury was the widow of De Flor, and she settled with her children in the outskirts of Brindisi.

That town is no longer what it was. In ancient days it possessed an excellent harbour. Cæsar, however, did it much mischief by blocking up one of the entrances of this harbour, and 1,500 years later a prince of "false Tarentum" completed the ruin by sinking several hulks laden with stones in the other. But in the thirteenth century it was still a place of consequence, being the centre of a great Levantine traffic, and the favourite resort of merchants, pilgrims, and others intent on the Eastern voyage. Here young Roger grew till his eighth year—a sturdy, handsome boy, spending most of his time about the shore, while he learnt to swim like a dolphin and climb like a monkey. At length a vessel belonging to the Knights of the Temple happened to be laid up in the port for repairs. As usual, Roger made his way on board, and there he showed such dexterity

and daring in his excursions over the rigging as completely won the heart of the veteran knight who commanded. When the vessel was ready for sea, this officer begged the boy from his mother, promising to treat him in all respects like his nephew, and to make of him in time "a worthy Templar." The dame consented, not unwillingly. Young as he was, Roger was already beyond her control, the pest of the neighbouring housewives, and the object of no end of gloomy forecasts. His patron bore him away to sea, and having excellent material to work up, moulded him into a consummate seaman. That was not quite what it is to-day, but still it was no trifle. It meant a man whose knowledge of current, shoal, and storm was more like instinct than experience; who could swim in his armour, and run along the oars round his galley when the rowers pulled hardest; and who was fond of a high sea and a heavy gale as a petrel. Nor did Brother Vassal neglect the interests of his protégé: he provided him with ample opportunity of displaying his qualities, and seconded his feats with all his influence. By his twentieth year, the youth was a Knight of the Order, and by his twenty-second in command of its largest vessel, the *Falcon*. Brother Vassal had kept his word: Roger was "a worthy Templar."

And what was that? Well, not exactly the realization of the founder's ideal. The special excellence of religious associations is a delicate thing, and not less evanescent. It flourishes and fades with the enthusiasm to which it owes its birth. Poverty and persecution may occasionally prolong its existence, but wealth and prosperity are sure to destroy it, and reduce the thoughts and tastes of the fraternity to the level of the rest of the world; or perhaps a little lower. So it had happened with the Templars. Having flourished with extraordinary luxuriance for several generations, they were no longer a band of pugnacious ascetics, who made as much parade of their poverty, humility, and temperance as of their valour. Generally speaking, they were now a society of graceful warriors, of misty creed and easy principles, who lived a joyous bachelor life, and wore a costume of peculiar cut. These were not precisely the companions to give a high heroic tone to the aspirations of a dashing young seaman. Roger, indeed, hardly appeared in command among the Templars before he began to make acquaintance with trouble. But not through idleness or failure. So far as he was concerned, every day had its enterprise, and every enterprise its victory. But his career was very prolific of temptations, and these occasionally obtained but too much sway. The navy of the Order was maintained largely with a view to profit, and the *Falcon* was quite as often employed in carrying as in cruising. Roger, therefore, had to make bargains and receive money, as well as to pummel the infidel. Now, being a man of pleasure, and keeping his purse open to all comers, he was frequently in pecuniary difficulties. And as, like most pronounced characters, he had some bitter enemies, unpleasant whispers of embezzlement began to fly about concerning him. Nor was this all. He was very subject to that influence which Scott

rather enthusiastically identifies with heaven. But this, perhaps, would have mattered little, considering the manners of the day, had he not been marvellously indiscreet. Among other wild freaks it was told that he had carried off a fair dame, "by force and arms," from the island of Scio. And it was added that another lady, who had taken passage in the *Falcon*, had been withheld from her husband at the close of the voyage, and, worse still, from intended pilgrimage to the Holy Places, by the redoubtable Roger. For awhile his brilliant services did much to shelter him from the consequences of feats like these. But his peccadilloes grew at length so exceedingly like crimes, that they could no longer be overlooked. His trial indeed was impending when the siege of Acre interposed, in 1291, and saved him for the time.

This was a stirring affair. Acre was then a very Babylon, crowded with life and wealth, and brimful of combatants. The Hospitallers were strong in one quarter, and the Templars in another; while a mass of fearless vagabonds from every Christian land thronged the ramparts. The attack then was fierce, the defence obstinate, and the slaughter awful. Numbers, however, prevailed at last, and the Turks stormed the town. Of De Flor's deeds during the siege we have no record, and only catch a glimpse of him as it opened, and once again as it closed. On the former occasion he aided in carrying off the multitude which migrated from the threatened city, and on the latter in rescuing the remnant of the defeated. This was no easy task. When the Turks swept over the last defence, the Knights of St. John gathered their ranks and fought their way to the strand, carrying with them a crowd of citizens. A Christian squadron stood close in shore to receive them. The pursuit, however, was keen, and the scene appalling. Here and there the knights breasted the assault and flung it back as rocks the rising tide. But the Moslems surged through the intervals on the helpless fugitives—slaying many, capturing more, and thrusting the rest into the waves. Some attempted to swim to the ships, others thronged round the boats contesting every seat; while the avarice of too many shipmen augmented the confusion. The claims of age, sex, and blood were forgotten in the rush for life. The weaker were trampled down, the poorer thrust aside, and only the strong and wealthy admitted to salvation. But all were not like this. "Above five hundred matrons and virgins of noble blood," says Fuller, quoting an original, "standing upon the shore and having all their richest jewels with them, cried out with lamentable voice, and proffered to any mariner that would undertake safely to land them anywhere, all their wealth for his hire, and also that he should choose any one of them for his wife. Then a certain mariner came, transporting them all freely, safely landed them in Cyprus; nor by an inquiry could it after be known, when he was sought to receive his hire, who this mariner was, nor whither he went." We do not assert that this mariner was De Flor. But though he carried off the richest cargo of any, he alone of all the shipmasters there had no profits to hand over to his owners as the results of that day's work. And besides he was just

the man to sacrifice every pecuniary and selfish interest to a magnanimous impulse.

The fall of Acre was a fearful blow to the Templars. Their Grand Master and their principal officers died therein, and with them perished for a period the unity and discipline of the Order, reducing it to that debility, which did so much to facilitate the work of Philip the Fair, if it did not tempt him to it. Years passed before the organization could be restored, and in the interval many small matters relating to individuals were allowed to drop into oblivion ; but the indictment against De Flor was not of the number. This, with the addition of the new and formidable charge of making away with great sums received for transporting the fugitives of Acre, was one of the first things considered by the new régime. The process—a secret one—was pushed with extreme celerity, in the absence, and in fact without the knowledge, of the accused. He was convicted of course, and hardly had the judges pronounced ere they proceeded to execution. All his property within reach was confiscated, a warrant was issued for his apprehension, and a party commanded by a personal enemy despatched to execute it. This officer did not dally on the way. Reaching Marseilles betimes he found the *Falcon* in the harbour and hurried on board, and just managed to miss De Flor, who had escaped a few minutes before. A friendly knight penetrating the secret of the trial had forwarded a warning, which, thus outstripping the speed of hate, supplies a tolerable proof of his capacity for attaching adherents.

De Flor reached Genoa A.D. 1300, penniless and ruined ; but not particularly the worse for this. Ruin, indeed, is a bad thing for your routine character who cannot conceive a future different from the past, and who therefore wastes his after-life in clinging feebly to the skirts of the old profession. But when uncontrollable circumstances have fixed brain and courage in a corner, where they have no scope except for mischief, ruin is decidedly a good thing, being, in most instances, the commencement of a real career ; and this was the case with De Flor. He was now thirty-three, a man of large figure and fine face, with a piercing brown eye, and a rough red beard that bore no small resemblance to a lion's mane ; and full of ability and enterprise, that had now, for the first time, something better to direct them than mere appetite. He had friends in Genoa, among others the Dorias. From these he borrowed sufficient to purchase and equip a stout galley : clapping on board 200 desperadoes—a plentiful commodity in Genoa—he stood out to sea, raised the rover's flag, and set up for himself.

But he had no intention of degenerating into a mere vulgar pirate. The houses of Anjou and Arragon were then at strife along the shores of the Two Sicilies—the former occupying the mainland, and the latter the island ; and to the seat of war Brother Roger directed his galley. Anchoring at Catania, then held by the Angevins, he went ashore and offered his services to the fighting chief, the Duke of Calabria. This prince thought so little of the new comer that he did not even condescend to reply. Three

days Roger waited. On the fourth he presented himself before the Duke. "Beau Seigneur," said the rover, "I perceive that my services are not acceptable to you, so I recommend you to God, and, with your permission, will seek a master who will know better how to appreciate me." The Duke replied pretty much as eighty old Fritz once replied to a similar request preferred by the future Marshal "Vorwärts."—"Captain Von Blucher has leave to retire, and may go to the devil if he pleases." "Very well," said Roger, coolly, as he retired. "I hope soon to show your Highness that I am worth something more than a cold reception and a rude dismissal." Half-an-hour afterwards he was out of port and steering for Syracuse, the head-quarters of Arragon. There he found King Frederick, who received him graciously, accepted his services, and assigned him a good position, with a handsome salary attached to it: that is, whenever the latter should happen to be paid. But there was no great prospect of that just then. The Arragonese, indeed, was so hard pressed, and so scant of cash, and even of necessaries, many of his garrisons being at starvation point, that it was questionable whether he would be able to make head for another month. This, by the way, was one reason why the Calabrian Duke had dismissed De Flor so unceremoniously. Considering the victory already in his grasp, Charles could see no particular reason for embarrassing himself with additional followers. Eight days after, Roger started on a cruise under the flag of Arragon—a bold step, for that ensign was rather rare in the Sicilian waters, which, besides, were crowded with hostile craft. It was, however, a very successful step. In a few days he was safe back, bearing with him eleven sail of the enemy, deeply laden with stores; and never was a prize more welcome. Part of the booty was distributed among the distressed garrisons, and the remainder sold so well that, after advancing a large sum for the pay of troops, and rewarding his seamen magnificently, Brother Roger had still 4,000 golden ounces left for himself. He now received four galleys from King Frederick's arsenal, equipped them at his own cost, and started on a second venture. He doubled Cape Spartivento, dashed across the bight of Squillace and round the Gulf of Taranto; but so far without sighting a sail. Then he bore away past Cape de Leuca, and up the Adriatic until Otranto lay under his lee. Here he fell in with a fleet of thirty Angevin store-ships, and, as an Arragonese squadron was the last thing they looked for, took them every one. This last stroke went far towards equalizing the struggle. On his return Brother Roger was richly rewarded, being created Vice-Admiral of Sicily and member of the Council, and endowed with several castles and the revenues of the island of Malta. It was plain the Arragonese knew how to appreciate the rover; the Angevins, too, were beginning to open their eyes to his qualities; but neither party had yet learnt his full value.

De Flor did not delay to form an establishment suitable to his new dignity and rapidly acquired wealth. He bought many horses, engaged numerous squires, dressed and armed them splendidly, and placed the whole following under five gallant Catalan knights. Having arranged this matter

to his satisfaction, he prepared his five galleys and put to sea on a new expedition. The Sicilian coasts were by this time pretty well cleared, so he wasted no time along them. Off he went to scour the whole Western Mediterranean,—stopping every sail he met, and helping himself to their lading so far as he needed. To his friends he gave bills of acknowledgement in exchange, and to his enemies hard knocks,—that is to say, if they grumbled; otherwise, like a generous rover as he was, he let them go with their barks and their skins undamaged. In this way he traversed the Italian shore from south to north, the Gulf of Lyons, the Spanish waters, and the Barbary coast,—returning with full cargoes to Sicily, “where,” says his ancient comrade, Raymond Muntaner, “he was as eagerly looked for as if the people were Jews, and himself the Messiah.” But not altogether on account of the spoils he was likely to bring.

During his absence the Arragonian cause had lost ground. Gathering a large army and a fleet of a hundred sail, the Duke of Calabria had swept the coasts of Sicily, committing tremendous havoc, and burning sundry vessels in the very arsenal of Syracuse. He had then settled down to the siege of Messina with all his power, and the Arragonese prince had no force capable of giving the city effectual relief. The siege, indeed, progressed slowly; but the Duke kept the port tightly blockaded, and famine was gradually and very surely sapping the defence. Convoys were occasionally introduced, but with small results. By the time they gained the place it was generally found that the escort had consumed the greater portion. When Roger reappeared, it was evident that the fall of Messina could not long be delayed, and equally evident that the catastrophe would decide the war. Aware of this, the Duke of Calabria strengthened his lines and tightened his blockade; and well he might, for Brother Roger was now busily preparing to take a leading part in the play. Purchasing four more galleys from the Genoese and taking three others that remained in the arsenal, he added them to his squadron, and loaded the whole with provisions. This done, he anchored them off Syracuse in waiting for a “hurricane.” And a hurricane soon came roaring across from Africa,—sweeping a yellow haze before it,—rolling the sea into mountains, and changing its azure tint into a portentous blood-red. Fishermen and seagulls hurried ashore for shelter; but not so Brother Roger, “Cut away!” he shouted, as the fleet heeled over before the first fierce rush of the blast. At the word some score of ready axes fell on the hawsers, and the vessels leaped off like racers towards the north. Conspicuous at the stern of the foremost, with his long red beard streaming in the gale, and his powerful voice distinct above its roar, De Flor led the line. The beach was crowded,—partly by gallant soldiers and noble cavaliers, and partly by those respectable Syracusans who had already, with matchless taste, turned the fountain of Arethusa into a—washing-tub! * “A wizard!” cried some. “A devil!” muttered others. “Wizard or devil, I care not,” remarked

* And a washing-tub it remained down to 1843. Whether it be so still or not, we cannot tell.

Frederick, "if he only succeeds." The sun was setting as the galleys slipped from their moorings, each under a shred of sail, for oars were useless in such a sea. But that shred was quite sufficient, and they flew like dragons under it, tearing through rather than over the waves, and leaving point after point behind them with unexampled speed. The night closed round the storm, but not too dark to hide the cliffs that rose and fled like shadows, or the dangerous waves that chased them fast behind. The midnight moon shone fitfully through the drift as they swept by Etna, that rose gigantic to the left, till its head was lost in the gloom. Shortly afterwards, one of the ships refused her helm, and ran headlong to destruction on the rocks of Taormina. A dull crash, a faint shriek, and all was over,—the fatal spot being left furlongs behind ere the death-cry had died out. A few hours later they were off Scaletta, and then a second galley was overtaken by a heavy sea and foundered in an instant. The Straits now began to narrow, and the wind if anything blew fiercer up the gorge. As morning dawned, the orange-grove of Reggio appeared on the right; and before the day had fairly opened white Messina, a magnificent spectacle, spread broadly to the left. The enemy's camp was all astir, and the ramparts were crowded with anxious spectators; but not a hostile bark was to be seen. Flying before the tempest, the great fleet was scattered far out of reach,—from Stromboli to the Gulf of Euphemia. The harbour of Messina running parallel with the Straits, and opening due north, is no easy thing to make when the wind is blowing moderately fair behind; and, as the blast was now considerably more than moderate, it was almost a certainty that the rover would be blown quite through the Faro. But that remained to be seen. The galleys hugged the shore as they dashed along. They breasted the point, and, as they did so, one after another sheered sharply to the west, and cut away the shred of canvas. Out, then, leapt the oars, and, mastering the storm by main force, they rushed into the bay amid a burst of deafening cheers.

Next day, the siege was raised; and, after a few attempts, as futile as they were feeble, on places of less importance, the Duke withdrew to Reggio. Thither he was followed by a jongleur in the pay of Arragon, who teased him for some time by singing his defeat in sundry taunting rhymes, until silenced by a sound whipping. This was the last of the war. Both sides being pretty well exhausted, the claims of the rival families were compromised, and the territories divided,—Anjou taking continental Sicily, and Arragon Trinacria. And the peace was ratified as usual in those days by a marriage.

De Flor's brilliant career was cut short by this treaty. Worse still, it exposed him to the vengeance of the Grand Master of the Temple, who, incited by Anjou and strongly supported by the Pope, lost no time in claiming him for punishment. This sorely perplexed Frederick. He loved the gallant rover, but he was too exhausted to protect him by the sword. Nor was De Flor the monarch's only difficulty. The pay of his troops was heavily in arrear, and he had no means of settling with them. He

knew not, therefore, how soon they might take it into their heads to disband, and cover the island with marauders. Indeed some of their chiefs, who held the strong places, roundly refused to deliver them up without their full pay. Frederick was not equal to the occasion, and confessed it with tears in his eyes: but De Flor was a different man. Scanning the situation with just such a glance as he was accustomed to cast across the perils of the sea, he soon discerned a way through the predicament. "What," he asked himself, "was to hinder him from leading these truculent ranks to the relief of the Byzantine Empire, which was so wealthy and so weak, and where Western valour might always command its own price?" The reply—a grand idea—followed hard on the heels of the query. He grasped it at once, and hewed at it until it took commanding shape; and then he sought his friend the King. Frederick was delighted, and agreed to aid in realizing the rover's conception to the utmost of his power. A galley was immediately got ready and despatched with envoys to Constantinople. Knowing the extremity of the Emperor,—that the Turks were carrying all before them, and that the Greeks left to themselves were incapable of stemming the tide of invasion, Roger felt assured that his terms would be accepted, and began at once to form his band. He issued a proclamation specifying the objects and conditions of the service, and assigning Messina as rendezvous. A man-at-arms or the captain of a galley, it was announced, would receive four ounces of gold a month; a light horseman two; a pilot one; a footman or an able seaman, a quarter of an ounce; and a crossbowman, or lower, a fifth. These were magnificent terms, and the leader was a chief among chiefs, the bravest of the brave, generous as a king and as fortunate as he was energetic and skilful. Warriors and seamen gathered in crowds, and De Flor had speedily an army at his back. Nor did the adventurers come alone. Every soldier was accompanied by wife or mistress, many by their children; and these females were as expert with spear and sword, and quite as formidable in close fight, as their lords and lovers. Thus at the call of ambition, and out of a heap of difficulties, rose that formidable military engine which was soon to be known and long afterwards dreaded as *The Great Company*.

The ambassadors speeded well. They found Andronicus at his wit's end, his Asiatic domains nearly all overrun; his last army just beaten; the Turkish hordes pushing forward to the coasts; some of their bands already sitting down before the seaports; their corsairs sweeping the narrow seas; and troops of their daring horsemen occasionally appearing beyond the Bosphorus to shake their weapons in menace at the capital. The Emperor knew not how soon the invaders might cross into Europe. Under these circumstances the rover's offer was most welcome. As Roger had foreseen, all his terms were accepted without demur. The rovers were to be taken into the Byzantine service at their own price, receiving four months' pay in advance wherever they should first touch Imperial soil. Roger himself was to wed the Emperor's niece, and to be constituted

Grand Duke, that is to say, Commander-in-Chief of all the Byzantine forces by sea and land. And the envoys brought back with them the insignia, the banner, cap and baton of the dignity ; and the diploma duly signed and sealed. No sooner had De Flor received these things than he hurried to get into action, lavishing his wealth with no sparing hand ; and borrowing wherever he could find a lender, especially among the Genoese. He had eight galleys of his own ; King Frederick gave him ten others and two barks, and he hired as many more from the Genoese. This fleet the King aided him to victual so far as his resources went, and it carried 1,500 men-at-arms, 4,000 of those formidable Catalan footmen called Almogaveres, all stern haters of the Moslem, and 1,000 other footmen ; without counting the seamen, who also were mostly hardy Catalans, with few to match them for seamanship in the Mediterranean. And could Roger have hired transports enough, he might have tripled his power. However, a great number of those left behind rejoined him from time to time in the course of the expedition.

They set sail in August, 1309. "God gave them a good time," says the chronicler, who is as full of pious ejaculations as an itinerant preacher, or a buccanier ; "and they had a pleasant as well as a rapid voyage." Many of them were musical vagabonds, and one or other of these had thrown together a few rough verses, which took amazingly with the Great Company, and formed indeed the usual chant of the oarsmen as they traversed the Archipelago—that sea which has listened to the songs of so many rovers, from the days of the Golden Fleece downwards. It ran something as follows :—

I.

He can manage the steed, he can handle the sail,
He can guide through the battle, and steer through the gale ;
He is fearless and peerless at sea and on shore,
And he woos as he wars, does bold Roger de Flor.

Huzzah for the Catalan, Roger de Flor !

II.

He is dashing and slashing—there's luck at his back,
And plunder and glory abound in his track ;
He shares with his friends to the last of his store,
And he quaffs like a rover, does Roger de Flor.

Huzzah for the Catalan, Roger de Flor !

III.

Through the brine and the blast, over bulwark and peak,
Through the hordes of the Turk, and the hosts of the Greek ;
Through the ranks of the fiends, should they master before,
We'll follow the Catalan, Roger de Flor.

Huzzah for the Catalan, Roger de Flor !

At the mouth of the Dardanelles they found their four months' advance of pay, a supply of necessaries, and an order to proceed direct to the capital. Thither accordingly they steered against a current flowing like aggression—ever from the north, and between banks typical of the

neighbouring races—Europe rising bold and rugged on the one side, and Asia stretching away in sluggish softness on the other: thither, dreamy skies above, dreamy waters under, and ever-changing loveliness to right and left: thither, in the track of the mighty, where every spot was hallowed by heroism, and every breeze that blew was rich with stirring memories: thither, softened, delighted, expectant, through the winding Hellespont, and over the broad Propontis, until the city rose before them, the splendid reality immeasurably exceeding their untutored conception. They scanned its vast dimensions, its lofty walls and goodly towers, its courtly palaces and glittering shrines with admiration akin to awe. “Truly,” said the Catalans, “this is the queen of all the earth, the treasury of nations, the city of wonders, the home of delights, the veritable terrestrial paradise !”* They landed early in September, to find subject for fresh wonderment at every step: for Constantinople was not then as now, a heaven to look at and an abomination to penetrate. Antique civilization still survived therein, and everywhere presented its gigantic works ministering to the wants that had created them: works which, far beyond the requirements and constructive capacity of the West, where their origin and uses had fallen as much out of remembrance as the buildings themselves had fallen into ruin, the Catalans had hitherto attributed to the demons and shunned as their haunts. And the rovers excited hardly less astonishment than they felt: their dress, their arms, their uncouth demeanour, and especially their troops of martial women, surrounding them with a curious multitude. A few days after the Megaduc, as the Catalans rendered their leader’s title, wedded his promised bride, a beauty of sixteen; and with her he fixed his Scian mistress as principal lady in waiting. The ceremony was attended with much show and great rejoicings, and closed with a tremendous riot.

The adventurers had barely put foot ashore when the Genoese—a numerous and powerful community in Constantinople—proceeded to dun them for the monies due. The Genoese were sharp practitioners, thoroughly versed in all the arts of swelling bills and ruining debtors; and what with discount, interest, and so forth, they had run up the reckoning in this instance to an aggregate of startling amount. The Catalans objected to the bill, and the Genoese refused to withdraw or diminish a single item. A quarrel ensued, insults were fully exchanged, and the parties separated in a temper that boded no good to the public peace. Both sides prepared for blows. The Catalans strengthened their quarter, in the monastery of St. Come—a saint, by the way, who, though sufficiently moral in later years, led, as there is reason to believe, a harum-scarum night-waking sort of life in Pagan times under the name of Comus. The Genoese too, with a view to the worst, threw up a fortification of barrels filled with sand on the verge of the Golden Horn. After a good deal of preparatory fencing and ill-treatment of stragglers, matters

* Very similar were the feelings of the Crusaders who captured Constantinople exactly a century before.—See VILLEHARDOUIN.

came to a crisis on the very day of the wedding. A mob of Genoese bearing the banner of the republic assembled in front of the monastery fully bent on a row. They began with rude gestures, the first note in the rioter's gamut, and soon ran up through hooting and stoning to the topmost note of the scale, an attempt to storm the place. The adventurers met them nothing loth, beat them back, sallied in force, and after a sanguinary conflict, in which the Spanish dames showed themselves terribly efficient in cutting the throats of those who happened to be knocked down, the banner was captured, and the Genoese completely routed; or, as the Oriental lookers-on put it, "driven to devour the paths of flight." "Very good," said the Emperor, who was well aware of the strife, "those haughty traders have met their match at last." But, having won the victory, the Catalans naturally thought that they had a right to reap the fruits of it; and girding up their loins they set forward to sack Pera. This they might have done to their hearts' content, but for one small consideration. Andronicus was rather afraid that once the rovers were fairly involved in such a pleasant amusement, they might possibly forget to distinguish accurately between Genoese and Greek. At his request, therefore, the Megaduc interfered, and with much exertion put a period to the fray. But from that day forth the Genoese showed themselves the deadly enemies of the Catalans, crossing them in every way, and doing them as much mischief as they conveniently could.

Pleased as he was with the castigation administered to the traders, the Emperor did not care to retain these dangerously ready brawlers in his capital a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. So putting them in good humour with a donative, he removed the Catalans that very day to new quarters beyond the Bosphorus. Not content with this, he hurried the warlike preparations, so as to get them as quickly as might be into action. All De Flor's suggestions therefore met with ready acquiescence; and at his demand the Emperor gave another of his relatives in marriage to Ferran d'Aunis, commander of the rover's galleys, and appointed the said Ferran Vice-Admiral of the Empire. Thus the Megaduc secured harmony between the services, and made sure that those important matters—supply and reinforcement—should be removed beyond the reach of Grecian treachery and Genoese hostility.

A few days saw the Catalans afloat again, and making at the top of their speed for Artaki. This town stood on the isthmus that connects the peninsula of Cyzicus with Natolia. Cyzicus in those days contained 20,000 habitations, and was cultivated like a garden; and the isthmus was crossed by a ditch and a wall—a bulwark that, in the hands of the timorous Greeks, would have availed but little against the savage swarm that was already but two leagues off. These invaders were not so much an army as a tribe: for every man carried with him his family and all his wealth—a style of making war that accounts for the rapidity of Turkish conquest, and its permanence. The Catalans landed at midnight,

and were led without a pause to the attack. As the day broke they reached the Turkish encampment, in a ravine pierced by a torrent. Contemning the natives of the soil, and unaware of the vicinity of the rovers, the nomades kept no watch. The cavaliers charged up the valley, shouting “Arragon! Arragon!” and the Almogaveres rushed down the hillsides, rousing the echoes with their singular war-cry, “Whet your steel!” The Turks were completely surprised. Many fell at the first onset; the rest sprang to their weapons and fought desperately; for, surrounded by all they valued, flight was out of the question. A stern conflict was that. The wild Iberian met the hardly wilder Kurd; the fanatic Moslem grappled the equally bigoted Christian; race wrestled with race, and creed with creed, as they always wrestle—to the death—and the Natolian gorge ran red that day with blood. Nothing, however, could stand before the ponderous charge of the Western horseman; and ere the sun was three hours old the fight was lost and won. Everything was taken; and every male Turk over ten that survived the battle was slaughtered in the triumph.

This happened on the eighth day after the riot. News of the victory was at once despatched to the Emperor, and with the news the choicest of the spoil. The envoys were welcomed by all except the Genoese, and Michael, the heir-apparent. “From that day,” says the chronicler, “the latter became the deadly enemy of the Great Company and its chief, preferring in his envy and hate the ruin of the empire to their success—who, though so few, had conquered where he and his myriads had shamefully failed. It was not that he was not a good knight. But God had stricken the Greeks with such a curse that any man might conquer them. And this came from their crying sins—their excessive pride, and especially their hard uncharitableness. They actually refused to succour their own countrymen who fled before the Turks, and though overflowing with provision, they left them to perish of hunger. Our Almogaveres, however, took pity on the poor starving creatures, and above 4,000 of them followed us everywhere for our broken victuals.”

Immediately after the fight the winter set in with great severity, and rendered further campaigning impossible. It was decided, therefore, that the Great Company should winter at Artaki, where their quarters were arranged with some skill. Six of the adventurers and twelve of the natives were formed into a committee for distributing the billets and regulating the relations between Catalans and Greeks. The latter were to furnish their guests with whatever they might require in the way of food at a fixed price; and a strict account was to be kept of what each man received. With this view a piece of wood was divided into two equal parts, the buyer retaining the one and the seller the other. Every item, or at least its cost, was recorded on both these tallies by notches of various size; the larger notches standing for the chief current coins of the empire, and the lesser notches for the small change. And the military chest was to pay for all before the encampment broke up.

The army being comfortably housed, the fleet was despatched to Scio to watch the Turkish corsairs. The Catalans spent the winter merrily after the fashion of such people. They feasted, indulged in warlike games and a good many quarrels, and tyrannized to any extent over the effeminate Ionians ; treating them to all that oppression and to all those insults which the degenerate must expect in such cases ; and which they usually repay with characteristic fraud and treachery, and occasionally with massacre. The Megaduc and his duchess, who had spent the season at Artaki, departed on the 1st of March, 1304, for the metropolis. The former returned on the 15th, bringing with him a supply of money. During his absence the accounts had been made up, and to the great astonishment of the soldiers, not a single one of them was to be found who had not contracted debts far in excess of his arrears. The thing, however, was not so very amazing, seeing that the Catalans, not caring to be bothered with such things, had in every instance entrusted their tallies to the care of their landlords. So, though the accountants and the debtors opened their eyes very wide, the Greeks merely grinned and winked. The items having been cast up, the amount of each soldier's indebtedness was inscribed on two slips of paper. The debtor received one of these slips and the creditor the other, and both were warned to present themselves and their bills betimes on the morning of the 16th at the General's quarters.

At the hour specified the Megaduc took his seat under an elm in front of his lodgings : a patriarchal way of deciding serious matters that was very prevalent among the great in the middle ages. St. Louis was accustomed to dispense justice under an elm at Vincennes ; the Dukes of Normandy were in the habit of meeting their suzerains the French kings under an elm at Gisors ; the free Frison deputies met at stated periods under the three oaks at Upstal ; the lordly cow-keepers of Uri assembled in tribunal under the chestnuts of Faido ; the four Rhinish Electors were given to holding council under a walnut-tree at Rhense ; and the Visconti were wont to meet their vassals under the cypress of Soma—a tree, to spare which Napoleon, who was little given to spare anything that stood in his way, actually turned aside the road over the Simplon. What with debtors and creditors, the crowd mustered strong by the time the Megaduc made his appearance. The examination of the bills occupied much time, but it was over at last. Then the chief stood up, and waving his hand for silence, prepared to speak. A good many faces looked blank enough ; nobody knew what was coming ; but all expected a scolding, and most of them felt that they richly deserved it. Roger was no showy orator ; but, like all men of his temperament, he had the faculty of putting his meaning into a few strong sentences, and thus ran his speech :—“ Brave men, I thank you much for having accepted me as your chief, and for having followed me so far. At present I find that you have all received as much, and twice as much, and some of you thrice as much, as is due to you. If the military chest were to reckon rigorously, every one of you would be

put to great straits ; but for the honour of God, and of the empire, and for the great affection I bear you, I make you a present of all that you have received, and shall not deduct it from your pay, which you shall receive in gold to-morrow. As for these notes, let the Greeks take theirs to my treasurer, and let the others be burnt." Hardly had he paused when a crashing shout rang from the crowd ; it was taken up again, and again, and still again ; finally subsiding into the thunderous melody so well known during the Mediterranean passage.

On the 1st of April the Great Company set forward, "with the grace of God," to the relief of Philadelphia, then beleaguered by the Saracens. Near the city they encountered the foe, to the number of 20,000, of whom fully a third were horsemen. A stout fight ensued, that lasted from noon till mid-day ; the Turks being finally defeated with enormous loss, hardly a tenth of them escaping, while the Catalans had but 200 slain. As usual, the Turkish camp was a mine of wealth, and the victors took and kept possession of it for the next week. Here, too, the Megaduc made new, and as it eventually proved, very dangerous enemies. Sundry bands of Byzantine mercenaries had accompanied the Catalans from the peninsula. They were mostly Bulgarians and Saracens,—for the Greeks had an ugly trick of recruiting among their worst enemies,—and they were massed by nationalities under their own chiefs. Roger soon found that these warriors were "formidable to everybody save the enemy." His own Catalans could do some plundering in a quiet way, but their "two-handed" mates kept a tight rein on them in several respects, and certainly withheld them from many outrages. The mercenaries, however, acknowledged no such restraint, but robbed and murdered until the inhabitants exclaimed, "The Emperor has sent the fire to deliver us from the smoke." They were not quite so fervent in the fight ; but then nobody could be readier in hunting down fugitives and appropriating spoil. Roger was not just the man to tolerate this way of making war, and finding his Bulgarian and Saracen coadjutors indulging as usual after the victory, he adopted decided measures. He gathered the mercenaries in a mass and enveloped them with his Catalans. He first stripped them of their weapons and their plunder ; he then seized their principal chief with his own hand, and drubbed him soundly with the flat of his sword ; he afterwards hung several scores of them, executing at the same time a number of the Company who had fallen into the same bad habits ; he finally turned the whole body ignominiously out of the army and left them to find their way back to Constantinople, as best they could, through the infuriated peasantry.

From Philadelphia the Great Company pushed forward to Thyatira. There it came upon a body of Turkish ravagers in the midst of their work, the smoke of burning hamlets rising in all directions far as the eye could reach. At sight of the Catalan van the robbers concentrated, and showed front. Not deeming them worth his own attention, the Megaduc called a favourite officer, Cormoran d'Alet, to whom he had betrothed the daughter

of his Scian mistress, and set him against them. D'Alet dashed forward at the head of 1,200 men, horse and foot, and broke the enemy at the first onset. The Turks dispersed among the marshes, and the Christians followed hard in pursuit, dropping the heavier portions of their armour to lighten them in the chase. Among others D'Alet threw aside his helmet, and in consequence received the arrow of a flying Kurd through the brain. He fell, and his men gathering round his body, the pursuit was discontinued. D'Alet was buried in one grave at Thyatira, and ten of his comrades in another, with imposing rites, and two showy monuments were raised over their remains.

They reached Ephesus, the next stage in the campaign, without a fight. Here they were greatly interested and edified by the tomb of Monseigneur* St. John the Evangelist, from whence issues a marvellous shower of manna every St. John's day, or rather, used to issue, for there is no such miracle now to be witnessed at Ephesus. Here, too, they received a reinforcement of 200 horsemen and 1,000 Almogaveres, under Berenger de Rocefort, an old fellow-soldier of the Megaduc. Berenger was at once made seneschal of the camp, in place of D'Alet. And similar bodies arriving every few months from the West, not merely made good the losses of the Great Company, but gradually swelled it to formidable dimensions.

But De Flor did not confine himself to gaining battles, gathering plunder, driving the Turk before him, and maintaining the strength of his Company. He was equally intent on reknitting the political organization of the country, which had fallen to pieces during the invasion. He restored the Imperial authority as he advanced; he garrisoned the commanding points; and he dealt out punishment to cowardly governors and treacherous officials with no sparing hand, hanging some and decapitating others. Nor did he spare the towns that had submitted to the Turk without an adequate resistance. These he fined heavily, and exacted the imposition to the last farthing. But speedy justice, excellent as it is, has its drawbacks; and Roger more than once confounded the innocent with the guilty, and punished both together. Nor was this his only error. Finding valour, patriotism, good faith, and every other manly quality at a low ebb among these people, he soon learnt to hold them in utter contempt, and hardly cared to exercise that control over his Company that he otherwise would have done. The latter, therefore, indulged largely in rapine; and as the Greeks had contracted the trick of burying their wealth, the Catalans speedily became adepts in the devices by which marauders in all ages and every country open the hoards of their victims, and tortured with all the skill of the recently-instituted Inquisition. The Greeks, in consequence, hated and feared the Catalans rather worse than the Turks, and avenged themselves at every opportunity by their usual weapons, assassi-

* The Saints were invested with nobility during the Middle Ages, and always addressed as Barons.

nation and treachery, but in nearly every instance to be detected and to suffer hideous reprisals.

Roger continued his conquering march unchecked. Everywhere the Turks fled as he advanced, and long before the summer was over he had met them in unusual strength among the passes leading to Armenia, and given them a final and decisive overthrow. In the very flush of victory he received a despatch from Constantinople apprising him that those dangerous hordes, the Bulgarians, were up in arms, and urging him to return in haste to the defence of the capital. Never was despatch more unwelcome. What was he to do? For once in his life he gave way to indecision, and called the whole Great Company into council. He read the despatch, and asked their advice. That was soon given. "Let us obey the Emperor, in the first instance," said the Catalans; "and when we have beaten the Bulgarians, we can come back and beat the infidels." De Flor accepted the counsel, and closed a campaign which the Byzantines themselves, much as they hated the rover, and reluctant as they were to credit him with aught but crime, were constrained to pronounce "most brilliant." "The discipline of the Company," says Pachymer, "their novel weapons, and their warlike fervour, so terrified the Turks, that they retreated before them even beyond the limits of the old Roman empire; and the Catalan chief restored the authority of the Emperor to a solidity unknown for ages."

The counter-march was conducted by the verge of the Levant; the fleet carrying the plunder, the baggage, and the provisions, kept pace with the army; and thus, by easy stages and without interruption, they reached the mouth of the Dardanelles towards the end of August, 1304.

But the capital was no longer in danger. Hearing of the return of the Catalans, the Bulgarians had hastened to come to terms, and all was now at peace in that quarter. Leaving the Great Company at Gallipoli, Roger went up to Constantinople for money—six months' pay for his troops. Money, however, was very scarce at court—so scarce that not a tenth of the sum could be collected. The Emperor received Roger none the worse for that, and, saying nothing of his poverty, he caressed and feted him until the mint had turned out a great heap of new coins of handsome design and choice workmanship, but of the very basest material. This trick was Greek all over. The Catalan, however, was not to be duped, and having spokeh his mind on the matter with his usual frankness and strength of language, he returned in high dudgeon to his men. There he seized Gallipoli, gathered provisions, threw up entrenchments, sent a galley westward to call up recruits, and made every preparation for a desperate tussle with the Emperor. This was not at all to the liking of the latter. He was well aware of what had befallen when his predecessor had quarrelled with Dandolo, and, of the two, De Flor was more to be dreaded than the Venetian. The latter, indeed, had overthrown the Empire for a time; but De Flor, it was but too probable, might thoroughly Latinize it, and transmit its crown to a long line of his descendants. The

Emperor then shut his eyes to the rover's proceedings, and did his utmost to win him back into good temper and fealty. To this end messengers went and came daily between the court and the camp, and the Imperial envoys pleaded, apologized, and begged the Grand Duke to return to the court, using all the arguments customary with such people, but without success. "Tell your master that he had better pay my Catalans, and that quickly," replied Roger, continuing his preparations. Meanwhile the Turks, finding Asia Minor denuded of its deliverers, pushed forward once again, and undid in a month all that Roger had done in six: they had even resumed the siege of Philadelphia, and were pressing it closer than ever. Seeing that no better might be done, the Emperor gave way, melted down a quantity of plate, stripped a good many altars, withheld numerous salaries, and, making up the sum demanded by the terrible mercenaries, he remitted it to Gallipoli. Roger was now satisfied, and returned to court to arrange for the next campaign. Just at this juncture a new and formidable body of Catalans made their appearance in the Dardanelles—they numbered 300 horsemen and 1,500 Almogaveres—in nine great ships, and were commanded by Berenger d'Entenca, a high-born gentleman, and the sworn brother in arms of De Flor. This detachment demanded the usual four months' advance in the first place, and an engagement in the second, and would be content with no less, to the great annoyance of Andronicus. It was useless for him to say that he had not sent for these fresh auxiliaries, and did not require their services. The first band, chiefs and men, made common cause with the new comers, and the whole tantalizing negotiation had to be gone through over again, and with a similar result. The Emperor might diplommatize, and reason, and procrastinate, but the adventurers knew their strength, and used it relentlessly. Andronicus had to give way on every point, and at Christmas, De Flor and D'Entenca appeared at court. Then the former received the loftier title and dignity of Cæsar for himself, and transferred the Megaducate to his friend. "The powers and privileges of the Cæsars," says the chronicler, evidently pleased with the honours of his chief, "are exactly the same in all respects as those of the Emperor. The only difference between the two is this—the latter sits a few inches higher, and wears a purple robe, while the former is dressed in blue edged with gold." Consequently, Jack was as good as his master.

It was agreed that Asia Minor should be wholly given up to the new Cæsar, who was to divide it in fiefs among his followers; and that these henceforth were to receive no pay from the Emperor, but were to depend wholly on their own leader. In consequence of this arrangement De Flor consented to receive the base money which he had so obstinately refused three months before in satisfaction of all demands. "But," said the Catalan to himself, "I'll take very good care to lose nothing by the bargain. What I receive from the prince, the people must accept from me; or I'll know the reason why."

Roger and his brother in arms returned in company to Gallipoli; but

not without a cunning attempt on the part of the Greeks to gain Berenger and play him off against his chief. D'Entenca, however, was firm against their wiles. For a day or two, indeed, he appeared to waver, heard all that was said, and received the Emperor's gifts with complaisance. But when the hour of sailing came, he gathered the envoys into his cabin, shewed them the glittering vases put to base uses, and then thrust them out of the galley with opprobrium, and pursued them while they remained in sight with hearty Western imprecations.

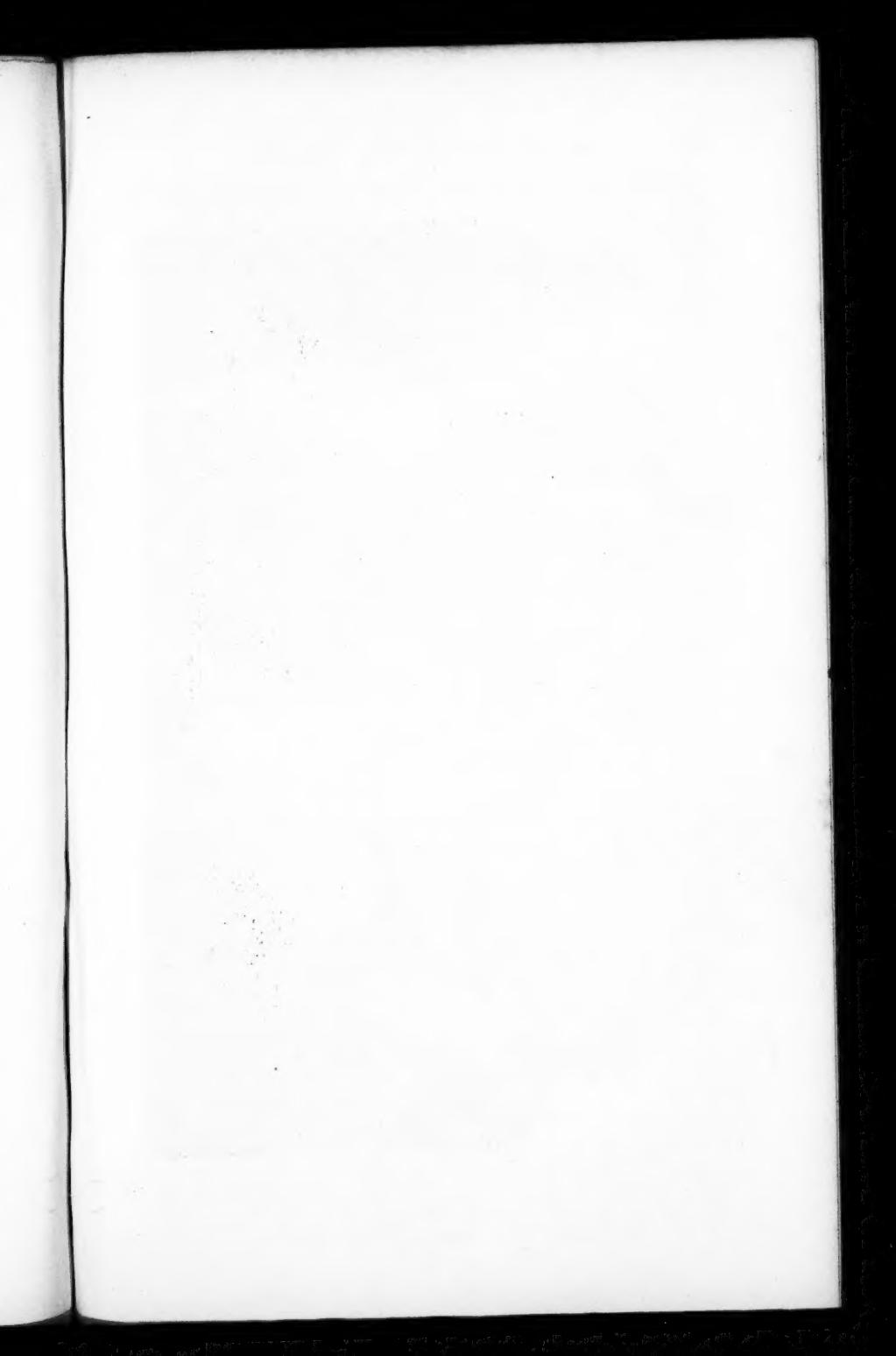
A grand career was now opening before Brother Roger—one that promised to exercise vast influence over the fate of the world. For there can be no question that the feudal system of Europe, firmly planted in Asia Minor by the vigorous hand and comprehensive intellect of the rover, would have thrown back the Turkish hordes *en permanence* from those beautiful lands ; while the Lower Empire and its corruptions, compressed between encroaching Franks on the West, and still more encroaching Franks on the East, must have been speedily crushed out of existence. The adventurer, too, comprehended his mission, and took measures to fulfil it with his usual fierce decision. He threw a strong advance corps ashore at Cyzicus, he sent a fleet southward to sweep the Grecian seas, and he despatched couriers to summon additional warriors from the West. Then, when all was ready for the march, he determined to meet the Emperor and take leave of him for ever! His Eastern wife, devoted to him like everybody else, heard of this purpose with dismay. She knew the treacherous character of the court, and she was well aware that many there thirsted for the blood of the new Cæsar. She warned, entreated, and wept ; her relatives seconded her well, and so did the leading officers of the Catalans, but all in vain. Then she and they excited the alarm of the Great Company for their leader, and soon raised an affectionate mutiny therein—the men threatening to restrain him by force if he persisted in his purpose. But Roger was not to be deterred. Gathering round him all the troops that still remained at Gallipoli, he made them his last speech—ridiculing their fears, making light of the risks, and declaring that he was bound in honour to take the course he intended. “Fear not,” said he, “for me ; I mean to live and lead you to many triumphs. And even should the worst you dread befall, why should that unman you ? The loss of a single chief should never drive so many veterans to despair. Should I be laid low to-morrow, there are scores about me fully as competent to lead the Great Company.” Accordingly, he departed, with 300 horse and 1,000 foot, to meet the Emperor and his son Michael at Adrianople ; and Muntaner takes advantage of his absence to give a curious account of the rape of Helen—which, in its mixture of current fashions and ideas with antique characters and events, bears some resemblance to the *Ingoldsby Legends*. “Hereabouts,” says he, “was a strong castle called Paris, constructed by Paris, son of King Priam, when he had taken Helen, wife of the Duke of Athens, from the island of Tenedos. In those days there was an idol in Tenedos, and

thither on a certain month in the year hied all the dames and nobles of Romania in pilgrimage. And so it happened that Helen came thither on pilgrimage, escorted by 100 knights. And Paris, son of King Priam, came also thither on pilgrimage, attended by 50 knights. He saw Dame Helen, and was so much troubled with the sight that he said to his knights, ‘I must verily carry her off!’ And as his heart suggested, so he did. He put on his brightest armour, and his knights also, and he seized the dame. Her knights took weapon to defend her; but they perished every one, and Paris carried off the lady. This was the cause of the war which destroyed Troy.”

Meanwhile, Roger went fearlessly to Adrianople. He reached the city on the 13th of March, 1305, and was received with much respect, especially by Prince Michael. Indeed, there was nothing but feast and festival in honour of the Caesar for the next six days. But all this while soldiers were being collected from the surrounding country and admitted by stealth into Adrianople, until there were not less than 9,000 horsemen secreted therein. Some of these were Byzantines; but by far the greater number were Bulgarians and Turcopoles, under the command of the chief whom Roger had beaten with the flat of his sword at Philadelphia, and of others who had lost relations by his just sentence, and who, therefore, were all deeply pledged to revenge.

Early on the morning of the 19th, the Catalans who happened to be in the capital were set upon and slaughtered. Much about the same hour the camp at Gallipoli was assailed unawares by an army, which was repelled after a desperate struggle, in which the Great Company suffered so severely that no more than 206 horses and 3,700 men survived it. The camp remained in fearful anxiety concerning their chief for four other days. At length, on the evening of the 23rd, three squires from Adrianople appeared at the barriers and were eagerly admitted. Their tale was a short one. On the 19th, De Flor had ridden to the palace with a feeble escort. These he left at the gate, and was conducted with the usual ceremonious respect to the Imperial apartment. As he stepped across the threshold a sword struck him through the back. It was a mortal thrust, but a hundred others followed it, and the dreaded chief fell stark and stiff at the feet of his cowardly assassins without uttering a single word. No sooner was the deed done than the word was given to the bands in hiding, who fell upon the Catalans and massacred them all, except these three squires. And they also would have been murdered had they not mounted into a bell-tower, where they defended themselves so long and valiantly, that the Emperor, for once constrained into a generous deed, withdrew their assailants and sent them safe out of the city.

The further adventures of the Great Company form another and even more interesting story, which will be found ably summarized in the sixty-third chapter of *Gibbon*.





The Little Supper.

and did violence to his nose, and he thought that every man should strive to make good a trade; if not in the world of business, at least in the world of literature, and no author should be allowed to grow old without having published a book of his own.

Against Time.

CHAPTER I.

FRIENDS ABROAD.



IT was drawing on to midnight, and, with the exception of yawning night-porters and waiters, any life that was stirring in Homburg had gathered itself very much into the *salons* of the Kursaal. The crowd of an hour or two before had been melting from the terrace, leaving only a few belated smokers among the deserted tables. While the last faint echoes of the evening's music were yet floating in the boughs of the chestnuts and dying away among the columns of the porticoes, the subjects of the Lilliputian landgrave

had set themselves to plod with Teutonic deliberation towards their fluffy pillows. Then went the professed invalids and valetudinarians — people who shuddered in the soft night air, going early to bed as they meant early to rise: who, morning after morning, descended to the healing fountains before the rising sun had kissed the chalybeate wave, or taken the chill off the breezes of the Taunus. Then followed grave fashion and serious respectability, tearing themselves away before pleasure should have dropped her mask, and begun to coquette with vice.

Count Saalfeld, the peppery and gouty Prussian diplomat, had gone limping off on his sounder foot and gold-headed cane, in hot dispute, as usual, with his Russian *confrère*, Baron Soltchikoff. De Roquefort, ex-French Minister at Copenhagen, after elaborately saluting the inseparables, who acknowledged the courtesy with the very slightest of inclinations, had attached himself, *en galant homme*, to the retiring Mesdames Von Saalfeld and Soltchikoff, whom their lords pretty generally left to shift for themselves. De Roquefort, strong in the acknowledged fascination of his manners and talk, and never more diligent in his business than when he seemed thinking of it the least, was always puzzling after the secrets of State, that might have an interest for the inmate of the Tuilleries. Sir Mungo Currie, the late Governor of Scinde, with his dark, crisp-haired, sallow-complexioned lady, her diamonds, and cashmeres, and fairy fabrics from the Indian looms,

the envy and despair of the princesses of the *demi-monde*; Athelstane, Member for East Wessex, bracing himself, after a long session of silent votes and stifling committee-rooms,—with Mrs. Athelstane; Chatterton, recruiting after a season of heavy dinners and heavier strains on his memory, wit, and fancy—all the quieter notabilities, in short, had disappeared one after the other.

Among the last to go, as the shades fell thicker, and, in the deepening hush, the clink of unholy coin came louder to her scandalized ears, was Lady Clapham. Lady Clapham is the representative of a class that you find crowding the last places in the world where you would expect to meet it. If she does not actually flirt with sin, at least she smiles on it, and goes out of her way to rub shoulders with a society that makes her virtuous blood curdle. All Europe is open to her for the autumn, and of her choice she goes to Homburg auf der Höhe. She finds no words strong enough for expressing her sense of the impiety of gaming, and denouncing the vicious gains of the Administration. Yet, season after season, she comes to share the spoils of M. Blanc like a veteran bird of prey hanging on the track of a gang of bandits, reads his journals, listens to his music, walks in his walks, kneels devoutly in the church to which he has munificently contributed.

This very evening she has seen her pretty daughters sipping their ices under the free glances and criticisms of Captain Cannon, M. de Carambole, Mr. Dicer, and one or two of their friends who were grouped round the adjacent table. Rising to go, she tacks doubtfully, and finally decides to hug that Scylla, rather than hazard the more perilous Charybdis on the other side. There Madame St. Julianne of the Bouffes, and Mademoiselle Nathalie of the ballet of the Gymnase, have been flirting with the Vicomte de Clos Lilas, the Chevalier de Calembour, and a party of the gilded youth of the Boulevards, ornaments of the Jockey Club, and munificent patrons of the Café Anglais.

With a dexterity only to be acquired by long practice, Lady Clapham gathers her chaste draperies about her, and sweeps them clear of the lace flounces of Mademoiselle Nathalie, buoying out a channel for the slighter figures of her daughters, who follow in her wake. She does achieve the difficult feat of shunning the fatal touch, although failing utterly in the impracticable one of staring Mademoiselle Nathalie out of countenance.

"Oh, Mr. Childersleigh, how very fortunate! Will you take compassion on three unprotected females, and chaperon us to the end of the terrace? It is so unpleasant moving about alone among all these people."

And the lambent look of indignation that had been playing in Lady Clapham's fine black eyes changed, as by magic, to a smile of winning sweetness. Mr. Childersleigh, who had just risen unconsciously from his chair—might have been somewhat taken aback at finding himself accosted by her. But he showed a presence of mind that scarcely faltered, as, shaking hands with the party, he turned to walk with them, and dexterously interposed one of the pretty daughters between himself and her formidable mother. Lady Clapham seemed no way to object to the

arrangement. Her timid fears were laid to rest now that they had found a cavalier; and, getting up an animated conversation with Harriet, she left Agnes and Mr. Childersleigh very much to their own devices.

Hugh Childersleigh was one of those men you are never surprised at meeting anywhere: men who live in society, are always on the move; in town in the season, and heaven knows where out of it: who may be tempted down to a country-house for a little shooting or hunting, but are more than fastidious about the society, *cuisine*, and cellar: who seldom show themselves bored, chiefly because they are slow to commit themselves to anything that bores them: who are the ambition and despair of mothers, the pleasure and pain of daughters. That very evening Lady Clapham had shot countless winning glances at him as she watched him lounging about through the groups on the terrace; snapping shortly at her daughters between times, as she saw that none of her shots hit the running target. Possibly the young ladies read and sympathized with the maternal heart, for they gave the meek answers that turn away wrath, and wistfully followed the maternal eyes with their own. As it was, patience and fortune had stood their friends. They were carrying off Mr. Childersleigh in triumph, a willing captive, and quite the friend of the family.

Before they had gone a dozen steps, Agnes had stilled her tremors before his brotherly manner, and was purring placidly in his ear, while her bright blue eye was melting away sympathetically in his gray one. To tell the truth, he was always ready with reciprocity of feeling at a moment's notice,—with any face, at least, that caught his fancy,—and what might once have been art had now become second nature. Lady Clapham had the eyes of Argus, but none of them unhappily were behind, or probably she would have left well alone. As it was, in her impulsive exultation, she pulled the string and scared the bird. As they reached the gate leading from the gardens, Childersleigh had begun to interest himself in the bewitching lines of beauty in which his companion's lips curved themselves as they smiled, and he was not the man lightly to deprive himself of an artistic pleasure of the sort for any fear of consequences.

"Pray don't let us take you a step farther, Mr. Childersleigh. Your penance is at an end."

There was a touch of motherly appropriation in her manner as Lady Clapham turned benignantly on the pair that would have warned him back to prudence, even had her eyes and tone not expressed, and more clearly far than the words, "Leave us if you can!"

Childersleigh laughed pleasantly while he suppressed an ejaculation of annoyance.

"I own to being less thankful to you than I ought to be, Lady Clapham; but then I never yet felt gratitude to any one who reminded me of duty in the midst of pleasure. The truth is, I was just on my way to keep an engagement when our happy *rencontre* put it quite out of my head."

"It's hopeless, I suppose, trying to persuade you to break it, even if we had something more attractive to offer you than a cup of German tea?"

Lady Clapham knew while she said it she was blundering foolishly, but it *was* provoking ; and she could not decide to let the string she thought she had got hold of slip through her fingers without making a snatch at it.

"Have mercy on my infirmities, Lady Clapham, and if I am a martyr to my duty don't add to my pains." And Mr. Childersleigh's smile became pleasanter than ever as he forced his hand into that of her ladyship, which scarcely closed on it, warmly grasped Harriet's, and silently excused his retreat to Agnes with a slight pressure, that, just as she chose to interpret it, might have been accidental or pregnant with meaning.

The Misses Clapham had by no means a very pleasant time of it that evening ; and, as their maid confided to Fritz the courier, she couldn't for the life of her make out what it was all about.

"Her ladyship was dreadful short with them all, worse than she had known her for a month back, and she see the tear in Miss Agnes's eye when she was doing her hair, and yet Miss Harriet was in uncommon good spirits to be sure."

"Confound the blundering old woman!" soliloquized Childersleigh, irreverently, as he walked slowly back into the lights. "And yet it's much better as it is, and I should be very grateful to her. It's a shame making that sweet little thing uncomfortable, and I wish I hadn't squeezed her hand. However, it was our *kismat*, I suppose, and I'd almost do it again to see the blood in that delicate cheek come flushing up to the touch like a waxlight glowing through Sèvres china. Anyhow it can't be helped, and I'll be on my best behaviour in future ; that's to say, if the mother doesn't have me taken off in the meantime. Upon my word, I believe she's capable of it, and it's lucky for me she doesn't believe in plenary absolution."

It is to be feared Childersleigh had stretched a point when he pleaded an engagement, for, when he got back into the lights and the world, his abstracted stride had died away into an objectless saunter. He went loitering through the loiterers, exchanging a nod or a smile with one, a formal bow with another. At last he subsided into a chair in the darkest and most lonely corner, lit and musingly smoked the better part of an indifferent cigar. It was a Frankfort one, and while the light was yet a couple of inches from his lips, died a natural death in its own oil, bringing him back to the world and sending him into the Kursaal. Coming from the comparative darkness and solitude into the blaze of waxlights, and the crowd within, as the loungers stopped or accosted him he felt much like an owl mobbed by small birds in the sunshine. Generally, from habit, he had words and smiles at will ; now he felt thoughtful and *distract*, why he knew not, but certainly Agnes Clapham and the little flirtation with her had nothing to do with it. Some men in the circumstances would have quitted the *Conversation Haus* and gone to bed. That idea never occurred to him ; and, as the shortest way of shaking himself free from bores and impertunate thoughts as well, he plunged into

the crowd that surrounded the rouge-et-noir table where the play was highest and the hush most deep.

Although no frequent player, Childersleigh was known to the chief croupier and to most of the gallery of onlookers. The former bowed deferentially ; the latter slightly opened their ranks, and soon he found himself standing in the front row, between Conrad, the high-born Count of Rabenstein, and Jack Barrington, once of the Rifles,—for ten years past unattached, and of anything you please. Each of these gentlemen held a few five-franc pieces in his hand, and was punting mildly over the man seated before him, as the luck fluctuated or the whim took them.

Round that table was gathered the prowrest chivalry of fortune—male and female—who had flocked to Homburg to storm those strong boxes that M. Blanc so gallantly held against all comers. Like the ruin it leads to, gambling is your true leveller of ranks. There, in the place of honour, by the dealer's right, sits the venerable Countess of Coucy-Clichy, with hooked beak and hooked talons to match, her literally blue blood stagnating in her withered veins. In the course of the long evening's play, the talons had worked themselves through her tight-fitting gloves ; while, in the heat and excitement, the paint was falling in flakes, and wrinkles and crowsfeet were showing in ghastly relief on her dilapidated cheeks. Since finally renouncing *l'amour* for *le jeu*, the Countess troubles herself but little with trifles like these ; although, from old habit, she still has herself serupulously lacquered for the day. With one foot in the tomb, she clings, tooth and claws, to the world : by fits and starts she makes her safety, and hazards it again, and flies from the altar to the tables, and the tables back to the altar. Generous benefactress of many a charity, and every gaming-table from Spa to Baden and distant Monaco, the Administrations everywhere reserve a place by his mistress's side for her venerable major-domo, who makes to her order the mechanical part of her game. Now she is winning, and she nods to Childersleigh in high good-humour, kissing her stained and torn glove with her harlequin lips.

Next to mistress and man is the superb Prince Paul Ivanoff, whose sandy hair and sharp cheekbones show his Calmuck blood, and who plays his stake with the sublime indifference of a man holding office in the Russian Treasury, with the credit of an empire at his back. Then comes little Solomon Meyer, of the Hirschgraben in Frankfort, the resplendent brilliant on his dingy forefinger drawing attention to that utter absence of nail that dooms him to ceaseless disappointment when he turns to prey on it. On the other side are Vargas, the Mexican millionnaire, who in San Luis de Potosi owns silver veins by the dozen, and *haciendas* by the score, with his well-cut olive-coloured features, and delicate black moustache, who mars his most brilliant strategy by his unquenchable craving for tobacco—rushes on the terrace in the middle of a run on his colour, to indulge in a cigarette ; and flinging it away half-smoked, rushes back again to find he has missed his chance and broken his luck. Then Tikilesti, the black-browed Boyard—his Moldavian farms hopelessly buried

under mortgages at eighteen per cent—who, in his untamed nature, plays to a subdued accompaniment of execrations, culled from a language richer, perhaps, in powers of objurgation than any known tongue. After him Marshal Merino, once Captain-General of the Havana, fast losing the wealth he amassed in winking hard at the slave-trade. And last and least, sitting modestly at the corner, Hans Schneider, the little steward of the Rhine boat, the *Prinz von Preussen*, who is playing, hit or miss, his small economies.

There is no such fallacy as the fancy that your heavy gamblers show their feelings in their faces, and that the tables are the place where a tragic painter may seek his studies of horror and despair. If he does go there he will find his best models among the outsiders, who see the few florins vanish they laid down as the frail foundations of their *châteaux en Espagne*. To be sure the Boyard and the Jew are somewhat demonstrative; but, for anything you can see, the rest might be quietly killing an hour at a round game played for love.

For some time Childersleigh regarded the familiar scene with the faintly bored look that seemed habitual to his features in repose. Gradually, as he watched, it lightened; for although, as we have said, he was no professed gambler, yet he had played often enough, and had risked sufficient in his time to interest himself easily in the chances of the game. At length, observing the Mexican opposite to be in specially evil vein, he felt impelled, as matter of simple prudence, to stake against him. Instantly, as if by enchantment, the luck began to change, and Vargas to win. Deal after deal did Childersleigh stake and lose his single louis, all the time irritated with himself for bullying his luck; deal after deal did the Mexican, playing up to the limits of the bank, add his 600 louis to the swelling heap before him. Fearful of the reputation of an unlucky hand, the dealer dropped the cards from trembling fingers, and ever the ominous *rouge perd* gasped out in his German-French told that the table and Childersleigh had lost again. Childersleigh felt in one pocket, then in the other: "all his pretty ones" were gone.

"You haven't five napoleons about you?" he whispered, impulsively, to Barrington; and seldom was he more surprised than when that gentleman, supposed the neediest and most wide-awake of men, placed in his hand the sum he asked for. Down they went, however, for to hesitate was to miss the flying shot at fortune, which his gambler's instinct told him must infallibly hit the mark. A *rouge gagne* told they were doubled. Childersleigh left the ten where they lay, watching with interest the dealer's hand, when, turning sharp round to a touch on the shoulder, one of the Kursaal attendants pushed a paper into his hand with an "*Ein Telegramm, Herr Graf.*"

Most men feel nervous pending the opening of such a document, and Childersleigh was far away from any one likely to telegraph to him; and moreover, had, perhaps, his personal reasons for thinking the contents might be important. Without a thought of his money or of the game, he extricated himself from the crush, and, standing in the middle of the room, tore open the paper, and read it eagerly. As he read, he cursed

Mr. Reuter audibly and in heartfelt accents, that made it clear he meant it. It *was* provoking. The message was dated four days earlier, and had it not gone wandering round by Hamburg, should have reached him four days before. It was brief enough. "Doctors say Miss Childersleigh may not live the day—cannot last the week." It came from Rachel Parkyns, Harley Street, London. Childersleigh did not often show excitement, but now, as he strode hurriedly down the room, his thoughts taking flight to England left an automaton behind.

Meanwhile, as it turned out, his interests did not suffer at the table. Barrington's perpetual dream was a fair chance of backing his luck. It had seldom come to himself, but now he confessed generosity to be its own reward, as he felt he might realize it for his friend with the money he had lent him. The run on the red was steady, as it had been on the black before, and, not drawing a louis from the mass, he bravely stood to it, and left Childersleigh's pile to grow and multiply. It was mounting fast in a geometrical progression, when Conrad of Rabenstein, who had stood gloating over it with greedy eyes, and whose timid counsels Barrington stolidly ignored, hastened off to seek his lucky English friend. Brought back to the present, Childersleigh, who prided himself on being practical before all, returned with Von Rabenstein just as some 200 napoleons, in rouleaux and notes of the Bank of France, were hanging on the turn of a card. It was too late to draw them : he could but wait and watch.

" Trente-deux, rouge. Confound it, it's all over ! Well, Barrington, you did well for me so far ; but you've played that plucky game of yours once too often."

" Vingt-huit—trente et un," droned on the dealer. " Rouge gagne et la couleur."

" I knew it," shouted Barrington, with indecorous loudness, making even the impassible Russian slightly raise his eyebrows, while the scandalized dealer appealed to him with a deprecating smile. " I knew your luck would stand, old fellow. Just go one other time, for my sake."

" No, no, Barrington. Many thanks all the same. I freely confess I owe the heap there to your dash ; but I think I'd rather change it all into good bank paper before it turns to withered leaves."

" Leaves, leaves ! What the *Henker*, as Rabenstein there would say, do you mean by leaves ? You're always getting up on stilts, and talking bosh, Childersleigh. I beg your pardon ; but I wish you'd come down off them once for all, and speak English. What I say is, if you don't stand by your luck when it gives you one chance, how do you ever expect to have another ? "

" I don't. It's thrown me over too often already to leave me any scruples about doing the same by it. Besides, I must go over to the ' Quatre Saisons,' and knock up Sams, for he's got his work cut out for him, and I have no doubt has been snoring for this hour past. Will you come round with me ? I must catch the morning express for Frankfort. Adieu, Rabenstein, *mon cher*, or *au revoir*."

"What! You do go then; you do not stay by your luck? Ah ha! Blanc shall be glad."

"Happy to do Blanc a good turn, Count. I owe him one. Well, adieu; I'm off. I haven't too much time as it is."

"You are off; but how then are you intending to bring the night to? It's not the trouble of going to bed. I will tell you what you shall do. You will come and make a little supper with me in the restaurant. There shall be none but you and Herr Barrington and Smolenski here. We shall have a flask or two of Steinberger Cabinet, and make, perhaps, a party at *piquet* or *écarté*, which you will."

So very pressing was the Count that, at last, Childersleigh was fain to yield. He pledged himself that, in an hour or so, when he had given his orders, and made his arrangements at the hotel, he should return and partake the banquet. Barrington was a good deal puzzled at Childersleigh giving way so easily. He knew he hated suppers, was slow to change his mind at any time, and did not much like the Count. That sentiment, however, was absorbed in the far greater astonishment he felt at the Teuton's unwonted outbreak of hospitality. Having stayed his feelings in the meantime with an internal whistle, he put them in words as they moved out of earshot.

"It would be a sin not to encourage him in a virtue he practises so rarely; eh, Barrington? I abominate suppers, as you say, and particularly dislike going to this one, for I've many other things on my mind; but, after all, as the Count says, it's not worth while going to bed, and I don't know that I can employ the time more profitably than in giving our little friend a lesson. My conscience will be my best reward. Did you mark how his eyes glistened over the gold as I changed it for paper? Von Rabenstein hasn't degenerated a bit from those robber ancestors of his that he is always trotting out for our admiration, who were smoked out and hanged by Rudolph of Hapsburg, as it is his pride and pleasure to believe. He was grieved that so much good gold should go out of the country, so he determined to try the ancestral dodge, only they manage these things more pleasantly now-a-days. Instead of having you up into their fusty old rat-traps, dropping you into the cellars, and putting you through a course of pincers and thumbscrews, and the larded hare, they ask you to supper at Chevet's, drench you with Steinberger, and then rifle you at cards. But it's the same principle, you see, and pardon my prolixity, *bon chien chasse de race*."

"I fancy people were never fools enough to walk into the trap with their eyes open. They knew a robber when they saw him, and gave him a wide berth when they could. You play a good game at *écarté*—I don't say you don't; but if I were you I wouldn't play after supper with the Graf."

"He has unfair luck, certainly."

"I'd back him against Houdin at cutting the king. Here, Childersleigh, advice may be sound if the devil gives it. You know something of men. Can't you take warning by me and pull up in time? I went down the very

hill that you're coming to, and see me now. Too late to put on the drag, good for little, caring for less; often cold-shouldered, and sometimes cut by the men I used to live with: and as for women—ladies, I mean—bah! You're a deuced deal cleverer and richer than ever I was, and you haven't quite got into your swing. Throw the Rabensteins over altogether, know the Barringtons and that lot as little as may be, and take a fair chance. Hang me if I know what's come to me to talk like this; but an ass spoke once, and if I remember right, the man who rode him might have done worse than listen."

The prophet was never more startled than was Childersleigh by this unexpected burst of feeling in his companion. Turning sharp round, by the gleam of a lamp he saw Barrington's eyes fixed on his with an expression of earnestness utterly strange to them. It was well he did so; for otherwise in his habitual distrust of the set he had thrown himself among, he might have taken his companion's unusual tone for a masked attack on the contents of his pocket. He would have been less astonished, indeed, at the discovery of unsuspected histrionic powers in Barrington, than at finding any symptoms of a heart. As it was, he felt that doubts of the sort would have been an injustice, and repentance following on suspicion, brought him to unwonted confidence. He felt more moved than he would have cared to own, at this veteran cosmopolitan's show of real interest in him; nor was he, perhaps, altogether uninfluenced by the compliment it implied to the gifts that had wrought the miracle.

"Believe me when I say I'm not the less grateful for your counsels, Barrington, that I had made up my mind to anticipate them. That telegram told me that a few days up or down must make me a rich man, and I mean to purge and live quietly as an English country gentleman should. I shall break with a good many of the old habits, if not altogether with the old set; but as for your excellent advice about dropping my acquaintance with the Barringtons, why it strikes me the acquaintance is a thing of the past already, and likely to turn to a friendship."

"As you like. And Rabenstein's supper?"

"Oh, I promised to go to it with my eyes open, and I keep my word. An impressive moral lesson is never thrown away; and I shall count the one I mean to give him among the first fruits of a reformed life. I told him I shouldn't play. He didn't believe me, but I don't intend to play all the same. Only fancy his face when he finds we leave nothing behind us to pay the bill."

"I can fancy his face, and I know he's got a devil of a temper. He's picked a quarrel and paraded his man for much less than that before now."

"I promised, and, depend on it, I'll keep my promise. But you don't know him so well as you think, Barrington. Von Rabenstein never quarrels unless he knows his man, and has half the points in his favour. He's as careful of his life as his money, and has his temper nearly as well in hand as his feelings. Besides, he's seen me knock the images about, and handle the foils. I shall be civility itself, and he must listen to

reason when I tell him that I have not a shilling more than I want to take me home ; and if he insists on play, that we must play on credit. That ought to stop him of itself ; but depend on it, if you let out by accident that I've come into a fortune, he'll spare me on the chance of plucking me another day. Oh, I think I see him doing the honours, his brow as black as thunder, his green eyes flashing fire, biting his lips hard to keep in the German oaths that are spluttering within."

" You mean to travel to England *en sultan*, then, in a special train, flinging your money from the windows ? "

" Not exactly ; but I think of leaving what money I don't want with a friend of mine. Listen to me, Barrington. As I tell you, I'm a rich man now, and these few hundreds are nothing to me. You presumed on my good-nature to-night, and I didn't cut up rough ; now, as I expect you to treat me in the same way, I pay you back the advice you forced on me. After what passed between us, nothing will ever persuade me that you can't lock your wheels yet, though you may have waited a bit too long."

An hour before, Childersleigh would never have dreamed of beating about the bush, could he have imagined himself guilty of an offer so insane ; and Barrington would have sprung on it utterly unhampered by scruples, accepting it with more contempt for the lender's weakness, than gratitude for his generosity. As it was, fast as a magic flower, a new-born feeling of self-respect and delicacy had shot up and bloomed in the latter's bosom, and he swore stoutly and honestly that he would hear of no such thing.—a proceeding the more honourable to him, inasmuch as he felt all the time he was risking the stings of undying regret when he came to repent so noble an opportunity neglected. He lost nothing, however, by this heroic effort of virtue. Childersleigh pressed him so hard, and with arguments so strong, that he could not choose but yield to them ; and if a loan is generally the fatal bane of friendships, this one seemed likely to seal the new bond between the allies.

Childersleigh had every reason to congratulate himself on the perfect success of the little supper in his honour. For an impromptu one, the *menu* was unimpeachable ; in its delicate fragrance and *bouquet*, the Cabinet Steinberger carried convincing evidence of unblemished pedigree ; while the Romanee Conti, that accompanied the Bohemian pheasant, flowed down like scented velvet. The host, with his silky hair, moustache, and manners, was all smiles and compliments. Smolenski and Barrington eat and drank for six ; and Von Rabenstein, as he pleasantly rallied Childersleigh on his temperance, never doubted he was keeping cool for the coming match ; and while he laughed in his sleeve, with great affectation of conviviality more than followed his example. When he found afterwards that not the smallest of the chickens he had been counting so hopefully would ever chip the shell, and saw that the Englishman was not to be tempted to play at any price, the sudden change in his demeanour, and his very unsuccessful efforts to hide it, afforded intense delight to his appreciative guests. —The Count sat on thorns, and talked in jerks. He

swored furiously at the wines and the waiters, and savagely snubbed Smolenski, who contemplated his angry patron in anxious apprehension. Barrington entered into the spirit of the thing, and, forgetting the prudence he had preached, called for cigar after cigar of the most expensive brands, threw them away half-smoked, and mixed his liqueurs unconscionably and in utter recklessness of the morrow. At length, Childersleigh, thinking of his journey, and softening to Smolenski's evident misery, cut the entertainment short, warmly wringing the hand of his entertainer, and genially abusing the kindly malice that, in making his last hours at Homburg so pleasant, had added fresh bitterness to the leave-taking.

It was a much less demonstrative separation from Barrington, when that gentleman saw his friend into the carriage that was to convey him to Frankfort. But Childersleigh, leaning from the window, marked the stout figure still standing at gaze where he had left it; and when the vehicle vanished down the long street, it was with more sadness than pleasure, notwithstanding his most unlooked-for windfall, that Barrington turned off to his rooms. Each felt as if he had made a new acquaintance, and yet was separating from a long-tried friend.

CHAPTER II.

A PEEP BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

NEVER for long had Miss Childersleigh been so well and bright as in the beginning of the year when she was to keep the inevitable assignation she dreaded so much. No shadow of the events impending seemed to have fallen on the house in Harley Street, although, indeed, it might well have lighted unmarked in the gloom of the somewhat grim old dwelling. Yet there might have been some warning presentiment, although unrecognized and unacknowledged, when its mistress, in an unusual flush of health, for once took serious thought about setting her house in order. Now-a-days there was but a single soul on earth whom she ever admitted to the most imperfect confidence, and that was the most trusted of her domestics, the mayor of her household. Even these confidences would only be given at rare and uncertain intervals. Sometimes they concerned the merest trifles, sometimes matters of graver import, occasionally even something touching on the sentimental. It was as if her human nature would now and then have its way, and break through her reserve in spite of her. To Hooker's astonishment these confidences were becoming more frequent and more significant than he had ever known them, and he grew more thoughtful as his mistress became what for her was garrulous, while he encouraged her in the mood by judiciously insinuated contradictions.

Strangest sign of all, she felt strong enough to have a standing grievance, and cherish it, and fret herself over it, without taking to her bed and moaning for professional advice. Instead of prostrating her as a martyr, this irritation seemed to act as a tonic, and give a positive

interest to her life. For it was a remarkable trait in her idiosyncrasy, not unlikely one day to be harmful to her, that when her complaint was on the nerves and the fancy, she began shrieking for the help of the faculty, while, if the danger threatened to be a real one, like the hunted ostrich, she sought escape from it in closing her eyes.

If the inmates of her house—with the exception of Hooker, who was gratified with an increased share of confidence—had rejoiced in Miss Childersleigh's improved health and spirits, it would have said much for their unselfish natures. For the grievance in this case was the delay of an expected letter, and the deepening wound throbbed to each touch of the postman on the neighbouring bells and knockers. It is no uncommon thing, unhappily, to see the peace of a household shiver on a grievance even less substantial; but as this one, for good or evil, was to sway the destinies of so many of our personages, we may pray the indulgence of our readers while we bid time flow back, and carrying them on its ebb to Harley Street, invite them to a peep behind the curtain we are going to lift.

It was Miss Childersleigh's habit to breakfast in bed, nor quit her room till midday. Then, piloted by her corpulent old pug, and followed by her maid, loaded with shawls and wraps and air-cushions, she descended to the back drawing-room. It was an apartment Melancholy had marked for his own, and Miss Childersleigh appropriated as her boudoir. The dim light struggled through the dark-stained window on the sombre paper, and a bleak expanse of table, unbroken by book or newspaper or cheerful work. The morning we see her seated there she had an access of unusually rude health and extraordinary spirits, for instead of secluding herself like a bat in its comparative darkness, the folding doors communicating with the front drawing-room were thrown open, and she sat blinking owl-like in unaccustomed sunshine.

That front room had its occupant too—a young girl who had buried herself in an arm-chair, and deep in the pages of a book, so that Miss Childersleigh, when she chose slightly to turn her head, had the profile of the other in full light against the windows. From time to time she looked at her, and yet always the movement seemed something of an effort. It was impossible that features like hers, seamed in rough lines and deep-worn wrinkles, should lend themselves to anything like play, but they were constantly ringing the changes through a few stereotyped casts of expression. It seemed as if her mind, once brooding over her griefs, ran on, by sympathy of gloom and force of association, from trouble to trouble, and that the girl was one of these, and not the least. She looked at her, as if obeying a fascination that seized her in her moments of abstraction, and each time an expression of dislike, approaching to repugnance, changed, ere you had well caught it, to one that was loving by comparison.

Her thoughts, if you read them in her face, had been buffeting her round in the same troubled circle. Did they run on the longed-for letter that never came; some deep-seated grief against the girl that she did her best to conquer, and the destination of her wealth to the too-lightly-come-by

happiness of some ill-deserving fellow-creature? Whatever they were, as each gnawed at her in turn, the faint reflection of health died out of her leaden cheeks, and its fitful light flickered down in her mournful eyes.

She roused herself as a loud single knock sounded from the street, seized either arm of her chair in her bony hands, straightened herself, and listened. Her sharpened ears heard the postman's rapid footstep on the silent pavement. The man came up the steps, knocked and rang.

"At last!" she exclaimed in quick eager tones. "Run down, Lucy, and bring me the letter."

Rapt in what she was reading, as she was, Lucy raised her head at the first of the words and laid down her book at the last. She looked like one dragged back from fairyland to a dull reality; but left the room as if in mechanical obedience to the peremptory words of command. It was strange to see the old lady as she waited for her return: her face all full of a simulated sanguineness, which insisted on stifling the voice that told her she was merely preparing herself a disappointment.

Lucy came back empty-handed and shaking her head timidly.

"No letter? Why, what does the girl mean? I heard the man myself."

"It was only a circular, Hooker says. Besides," she added hesitatingly, "I don't think this is the hour for delivering foreign letters."

"Do you think I don't know that, and have you not told me just the same thing every day for a week past? Do you suppose letters are not constantly delayed, or do you fancy you know better than I do? There, it's no use sitting down to your book again, and it's quite time to go out for your walk. You can't have Parkyns; I may want her myself. Take one of the maids and go at once."

"Yes, Miss Childersleigh," said Lucy, with a slight trembling at the corners of her mouth.

"And come here and kiss me first. There, that will do—now you may go. How like that child sometimes is to her father, for all she has her mother's features to the very dimples," pursued Miss Childersleigh. "I'd give the half of all I have to see her always look as she looked just now. How different things might have been; and who knows whether I might not have taught her to come to love me? As it is, I believe she really cares for me as little as her father did. I took her for his sake, and for old remembrances, and I was a fool to fancy he could ever leave me anything but a legacy of trouble. I've come near enough to loving her to know all it might have been to me if I only could. After all, I believe I hate her; and yet I am sure I like her as much as any one, now that Hugh has cast me off. There it is again, and always round to the same thing. What am I to do with that money of mine? I must make a will some day, were it only that I've promised Lucy to provide for her. Besides, if I did not, all I have would go to Hugh; to Hugh, who does not think me worth the scrawling a couple of lines. Ah, well, we'll see. I'll finish once for all with this trouble and anxiety, and fairly

settle everything out of hand. It ought to be done when one's strong and well, so I'll make up my mind and send for Rivington."

There came a gentle tap at the door, as if the new arrival had discreetly awaited the close of the soliloquy, and Mr. Hooker entered, bearing Miss Childersleigh's midday egg and sherry. Hooker was an elderly gentleman of sleek aspect and profound repose of manner, as might be expected of one who had spent a long life at free quarters,—great part of it as the autocratic Miss Childersleigh's man of confidence. With his polished crown, set in its carefully brushed wisps of grizzled hair, he looked benevolent, but yet as if he could be stern, too, on occasion.

He set the glass on the table by his mistress's elbow, and waited respectfully, in case it should please her to address him. After the disappointment the postman had caused her, he was quite prepared to be flown at. But Miss Childersleigh had eased her mind a good deal by the process of making it up to something, and although she spoke, it was pretty quietly.

"So there's no letter to-day from Mr. Childersleigh, Hooker?"

"It's most extraordinary, ma'am; and what he's about I can't for the life of me imagine."

"If I could only think mine had gone astray."

"Yes, ma'am; but then it was addressed to the care of the bankers, so that can't possibly be. Mr. Hugh's not particular about many things, but he is a particular gentleman about having his letters forwarded."

"What do you think of it, then, Hooker? Speak out, can't you!" snapped Miss Childersleigh for about the hundredth time.

"That young gentlemen will be young gentlemen," responded Hooker, sententiously, for the hundredth time. "Mr. Hugh always has so much to do, and so much to think of."

"Is that all you can say for him! But whom ought he to think of first? Who, of all his friends, has done so much for him as I have?"

"Surely no one, ma'am. But I like Mr. Hugh, and, even at the risk of offending you, I should be glad if I could find excuses for him."

"If you can say nothing better for him than that, for his sake you had better leave it alone," retorted Miss Childersleigh, with a good deal of truth.

Hooker bowed in silence, and made as if he would withdraw.

"I don't know that I've felt so strong for many years past," she resumed abruptly.

"I am sure that's true, ma'am, as I was just saying to Parkyns," responded Hooker with much enthusiasm, as if charmed at having found something at last he could assent to cordially.

"Never you mind what you said to Parkyns. I say I never was better in my life, and I think of sending for Mr. Rivington about my affairs."

"Sending for Mr. Rivington!" Hooker grew red, and his breath came shorter, as he made nervous snatches at his stock. He showed, in fact, more agitation than might have been natural in an old family servant who cherished reasonable hopes of being remembered by his mistress. How-

ever, he steadied his nerves, rallied his presence of mind, and resolved dexterously to clinch the nail she seemed inclined to drive. "Thinking of sending for Mr. Rivington, ma'am? You're in excellent health, indeed; but are you not afraid business of this sort might chance to upset you?"

"I will have Mr. Rivington sent for. You see that he is here to-morrow afternoon."

"Certainly, ma'am. You can't do better than take Mr. Rivington's advice."

"I have no intention whatever of taking Mr. Rivington's advice. Everything shall be settled out of hand before he comes, and he shall just do as I tell him. No lawyer of them all shall go giving away my property for me."

"Well, ma'am, I only thought as Mr. Rivington has been the family man of business all his life. But, to be sure, no doubt you've made up your mind. Mr. Hugh——"

"Made up my mind. Why, if you mean you think Mr. Childersleigh's going to have it all, why should I trouble about a will: just tell me that? It would all go to him if I did nothing," she went on, thinking aloud, rather than speaking to Hooker. "And at one time I liked to believe I could do nothing better. When I felt myself breaking up I should have provided for any one I chose to provide for, and he might have done as he pleased with the rest. Why should he go and behave in this way, giving me all this anxiety and trouble? But if he suffer for it he will only have himself to blame: if he can't even spare me five minutes from the pleasures my money buys to answer the letter I go out of my way to write him."

"And you who never write to any one else, as he knows so well," interjected Hooker, softly. "Well, I've always liked Mr. Hugh, but I must say I would never have believed it of him. For his own sake one might have been sure he would never have given you cause of offence."

"That's very true, Hooker, and the most rational thing I've heard you say yet. Mr. Childersleigh has, at least, common sense, has he not? and he would have felt it well worth while to give up anything rather than seem to neglect me."

You might have said the worthy Hooker was rather taken aback by the serious way in which the suggestion he had so thoughtlessly thrown out was received. It may be surmised that inwardly he was cursing his indiscreet tongue as a most unruly and mischief-making member.

"But, after all, we are quite sure of one thing," he hastened to rejoin, shaking his head. "The letter has reached him; we are sure of that."

"Then if mine has reached him, it is his that must have gone astray; or very likely he is ill, and I never thought of that. Perhaps he is dying while you stand there abusing him."

"I abusing him, ma'am," expostulated Hooker, staggered by this unexpected onslaught.

"Yes, abusing him; of course you were. However, I'm certain

there's a great deal in what you say, about his not being fool enough to offend me."

Hooker's face went on lengthening. He knew his mistress well. When she laid hold of a scrap of comfort in the midst of her self-created griefs, she clung to it for the time with all her feeble strength, revelling in the pleasurable sense of relief it brought her. This careless argument, to which he had attached no meaning himself, would make her suspend final judgment and sentence on Childersleigh—at any rate until after the interview with Mr. Rivington.

"After all," she went on meditatively—"after all, it's almost certain he's not to blame, and I'm glad of it. It would have been so much trouble thinking what I was to do if he had been. Yet he may be, too; and then there can be no doubt whatever he's terribly extravagant: he might fling away all my money when he got it. Perhaps the best way might be to do what I've sometimes thought of doing, and tie it down with conditions. Then there's the provision I promised Lucy—and Parkyns ought to have something, and you, Hooker," added Miss Childersleigh, turning sharply on her companion.

Hooker, taken unprepared, seemed to have a violent inward spasm, as of one who meditates playing a desperate stake. Perhaps it was the finding himself face to face with the occasion of remedying the *maladresse* he had been guilty of earlier, of letting go a bird in hand for the chance of a cageful from the bush, of playing, at great risk, for a say in his eccentric mistress's final dispositions.

"Excuse the great liberty I take, Miss Childersleigh"—and the words came pumped up as by a series of efforts—"I don't often offend, I trust, although I have a way of speaking my mind; but what I would venture to say is this: I should not like to be forgotten altogether while you are remembering other people, but if you do think of leaving me a remembrance, you will double its value by letting me know nothing about it; and please to recollect, that the less you make it the more grateful I shall feel. I have my feelings and, perhaps, my fancies, but I couldn't bear to be enriched by a loss I should never recover. It signifies the less," he added, cheerfully, "that, if I ever did come into any property of yours, it would be a very long time first."

He gave vent to these affecting utterances, much as if repeating by rote a carefully conned lesson. Perhaps, on that account, they were all the more impressive, as they tickled gently and gratefully his hearer's clinging attachment to life. He might possibly have already found a foretaste of his reward in the unusually cordial look she turned on him. If he expected more he was disappointed. Gracious speeches were even stranger to her lips than trustful thoughts to her heart. But it may have been the delight and surprise of finding Hooker's character ring so true, that, for the time, disposed the reserved old solitary to come out of her shell and sun herself in unusual confidences.

"Mr. Hugh is frightfully extravagant, Hooker."

A guarded bow was the response, that might mean assent or dissent, just as you pleased to read it.

"But it has been in some measure my fault."

A silent shake of the head, eloquently deprecatory.

"I have supplied him the means of indulgence until indulgence has become a habit, when, if I had left him to himself with his connections and opportunities and talents he might have been a distinguished man. Mr. Childersleigh has great abilities."

"I don't believe, ma'am—I do not believe a cleverer gentleman lives, or one better able to help himself if he could only be made to try."

"That's the very thing that so often occurs to me, Hooker," exclaimed Miss Childersleigh, speaking eagerly and with a brightening face. "It's not too late. It can't be too late; he's but a boy yet. If I were to put in my will, the very terms I should offer him when he comes back to apologize? If anything should happen to me—"

"No chance of that, not the least in the world," murmured Hooker, absently, but audibly.

"Then, if anything should ever happen to me, he will find I have tried what I can to repair any wrongs I may have done him; to make him live to some useful purpose; that I have put within his reach an easy chance of growing rich. If he has used me ill, I'll punish him in making atonement to him."

Miss Childersleigh, it will be seen, being doubtful of the guilt of her relative, adopted the feminine plan of inflicting mitigated punishment. Hooker contented himself again with a parenthetical bow, which he might have dispensed with. Again his mistress was talking to herself, and not thinking of him.

"He may look, I daresay, to inherit all I have. If I left him, say 10,000*l.* now, and not a penny more, but with the condition that, if in three years' time his own exertions added 20,000*l.* or 30,000*l.* to that and anything he may have left of his own, he should come into all. If he be what I think he is, he can do it. If he is an incorrigible spendthrift, better have a part of my money squandered than the whole; and my conscience will be clear. What do you say, Hooker? You've heard what I think."

"You ask my candid opinion, ma'am?"

"Do you suppose I'd come to you for anything else?"

"Then I must honestly say you set a far lower value than I do on Mr. Hugh's capacity, if you give him no harder work than that. In my station, I can't be expected to know much of these things; but they do say that at your relatives' the bankers', for instance, they think nothing of turning a sum like that of a morning. There are those new companies that are coming out every day in the City,—put your 10,000*l.* into one of them, and leave it there, and, as they tell me, in a few months it's either 50,000*l.*, or—." And Mr. Hooker opened his thumb and finger in the air, in expressive pantomime. "Now, Mr. Hugh would think nothing of going to work in that way. It's just in his line,—nothing more so."

"At all events, you know more of these things than I do. Nobody but the Government ever had a shilling of my money."

"Well, ma'am," proceeded Mr. Hooker, summing up judicially, "if I understand you aright, what you want is to send Mr. Hugh to work. You mean to offer him a prize that is some trouble to come by, but quite within his reach. To make him climb for it, instead of shaking his head and walking off. I know you're rich; but how rich, I don't know. I hear people talk—for talk they will—of 200,000*l.*, 300,000*l.*—"

"You may call it 200,000*l.*, Hooker. No one else knows as much, and you take care they don't."

"Thank you, ma'am. Well, really you must excuse me, but such is my notion of Mr. Hugh, if I were you, and I wished him to do justice to himself, frankly, I shouldn't add a shilling more than 10,000*l.* to what he has of his own. That's a good deal, I suspect. Mr. Hugh's perhaps not so extravagant as he seems; and I should insist on his showing sovereign for sovereign against all your money, if he means to win it."

"You know you're talking absolute nonsense, Hooker. No man could find the moneys in the time."

"Pardon me, ma'am, again; but I think I know Mr. Hugh, and I'm sure I know how easily they come by money now-a-days, and you confess you do not. With his talents and property, he'll find doing all I speak of pleasant occupation. Why, with his connections in the City, his very name would be a fortune."

"Well, Hooker," said his mistress, looking up in the major-domo's face searchingly and rather wistfully, "you may be right; and you can have no interest in misleading me."

Hooker met her eyes with a limpid honest look, and was voluble in protestations. Perhaps the old lady's isolation had seldom come home to her more keenly than now, when in casting about for an heir she was thrown on the counsels of a servant.

"At least the ten thousand shall be twenty," she went on. "I want him to work, not to despair. It's not for me to make his task so hard, who have done all I can to spoil him for it."

Hooker remained silent, only half satisfied, as it appeared, although he had every reason to be pleased with the success of his coup, and gratified with the unwonted docility of his mistress. He might have desired to assure Hugh a more effectual stimulus, but he felt the trying it would be lost labour, and he waited.

His mistress recommenced abruptly.

"Then there's Lucy Winter. I hope I've done my duty by her."

"Very much more than your duty," murmured Hooker.

"Yes. You can bear witness I've done my duty by her. She was of my blood, but she had nearer relations than me. I've assured her she should be provided for, and provided for she shall be, one way or another, —but how? If I could only tell whether I liked her," muttered the old lady. "If I could only guess whether she liked me."

"Forgive me for trespassing on your indulgence again," interposed Hooker; "but that's just a point another person can judge of so much better, and both for your sake and hers I must speak. Since she came here, I've watched Miss Winter, partly on your account, partly to make a clean breast of it on my own, for old servants don't feel very warm to new comers; and you may believe me when I tell you it's my honest opinion that you can't make too much of Miss Lucy, or do too much for her. I would almost go as far as to say I'm not fonder of you myself than Miss Lucy is. She's timid as yet," he went on; "and as she grows older she'll get bolder. Then you'll come to know her better, and, in the meantime, there's no great hurry. A codicil's easily added."

"There's something in that, but I pledged myself she should be remembered whenever I made my will."

"Might you not put her down for a little something now, adding that in any case you mean to increase it by codicil?"

"If I did, I should add nothing of the sort. What's the use, indeed? If I were not absolutely certain I should have opportunity to change the bequest a hundred times if I wished, I should leave her something handsome at once. As you said before, there's no hurry, and now you talk as if I were making my will because my health was breaking up."

"God forbid, ma'am," exclaimed Hooker with great fervour, mentally cursing the morbid sensitiveness that made the most guarded talk so perilous. "I'm sure you're very right."

"Very well, you may go. I've spoken more than enough for me—such wretched health—and remember that Mr. Rivington comes after luncheon to-morrow, to take my instructions."

Hooker turned to withdraw from the interrupted colloquy, discomfited and rather crestfallen.

"And, Hooker?"

He paused by the door.

"Although sometimes you do talk strange nonsense, you can be rational when you please. This business must be off my mind, and before Mr. Rivington comes I must settle something in the event of things going past Mr. Childersleigh. So, if anything strikes you, I give you leave to suggest it. Nothing whatever shall stand over except, perhaps, that codicil about Miss Winter."

"How I wish my boy had been there in my place," meditated Mr. Hooker as he slowly descended the stairs. "His head's worth a good dozen of mine, and his wits are twenty times as ready. Ah! he wouldn't have blundered where I did, and as it's past mending now, I'd better say nothing about it. It would only vex him, and what's the use? After all, what a chance we have, and who'd have expected it? and, on the whole, I haven't managed so very ill. Now, to see him about what's to be said and done to-morrow, and then—good luck to Mr. Childersleigh."

CHAPTER III.

RELATIONS AT HOME.

SOME days before the telegram disturbed Hugh Childersleigh at Homberg, the few inhabitants of Upper Harley Street who were still in town awoke one morning to find a heavy fall of tan cumbering the street below their windows. The phenomenon was by no means a very uncommon one there; in fact, it occurred regularly at irregular intervals, whenever the rich and eccentric Miss Childersleigh fancied herself on her deathbed. So the sight did not much affect Mr. Purkiss Childersleigh, although he had come specially to inquire after Miss Childersleigh's health, and drew the inference at once that it was she who fancied herself *in extremis*. Miss Childersleigh was his distant relative and much-valued client. Mr. Purkiss was second son and junior partner of "Childersleigh's," the great banking establishment in Lombard Street; and the *malade imaginaire*—as he believed her—stood in somewhat more remote propinquity to his father, Sir Basil, the head of the house, than to Colonel Childersleigh, the deceased parent of our earlier acquaintance, Hugh. Near relatives she had none; but had Purkiss been her son, instead of a very distant cousin, he could not have been more systematically affectionate in his attentions. Here was he, a man of business, whose time was money, whose very minutes were half-crowns, taking Harley Street in his way from Hampstead to the City, and merely to inform himself about her health, without knowing that anything in especial had come to endanger it. Meantime Hugh the prodigal was wasting abroad in riotous living what little of his substance was left him. Yet Purkiss mournfully owned that Miss Childersleigh—eccentric here as everywhere else—not only cherished the prodigal more than any one, but perhaps liked him the better for his irregularities, even for his indifference. She supplied his extravagances lavishly from time to time,—while, since a stray sovereign or two in his boyhood, she had never given Purkiss a civil word, to say nothing of a cheque. Thus gloomily meditating, he found his hand on the muffled knocker, and took it down to touch the servants' bell.

"How's your mistress, George? Nothing very serious the matter, I trust?"

Purkiss was always respectfully civil to all the inmates of that house, even to the buttons, who now held the door ajar.

The boy hushed almost to a whisper the voice that was generally trembling on the verge of a whistle, and his usually quizzical face wore an unusually grave expression.

"Taken very bad indeed, Mr. Purkiss. Mrs. Parkyns and Miss Winter have been a-sittin' up with her all night; and Mr. Hooker he was so overcome that he went to bed immediately after supper. Sir Felix Groper is not gone five minutes. Dr. Pillington's upstairs now——"

Here a velvety hand laid itself noiselessly on George's collar, promptly

choked off his loquacity, and twisting him quietly round, dismissed him inwards with a slight but significant impulse.

"Ah, Hooker"—and Purkiss gave his hand with deferential cordiality to the confidential domestic—"is it really true what the boy tells me, or is it only that Miss Childersleigh is over-anxious about herself as usual?"

Hooker shook his head. "No, no, Mr. Purkiss. She's been complaining for a day or two past; not that I thought much of it till yesterday afternoon, and then I saw she must be bad when she wouldn't hear of sending for Sir Felix. If there had been nothing much the matter, she'd have had the boy started off in a hansom for him at once. Then, when Pillington called in the afternoon, she wouldn't let him come up at all—the first time she's done such a thing since she was so nearly gone the year before last."

"But they've both seen her, George tells me?"

"She fell over last night insensible, and has never been herself since. Lord love you, Mr. Purkiss, we've had Sir Felix here twice; and as for Pillington, he's scarcely left her room since he went upstairs in the evening. You know him, sir. Pillington's like one of his own leeches, as I always say—where he fastens he sticks. It's paralysis, Sir Felix says; they've quite given her up. It comes hard on me, Mr. Purkiss, I do assure you. If you'll allow me to say so, the poor lady has made me feel to her like a friend."

"It comes hard on all her friends, Hooker. In the meantime I'm sure things can't be left in better hands than yours. If anything were to happen, indeed, I suppose my father or I had better see to them?"

"Certainly, sir; to be sure, Mr. Purkiss—that would be but natural, only—she was always strange in some things, a little crotchety, one might say—only that Miss Childersleigh, when last she saw Mr. Rivington on business, told him before me and Miss Winter, that, in case of her death, if he were to survive her—that's the way she put it—he was to take all the arrangements into his hands. It was the time she came home from Brighton so strong and well."

Mr. Hooker played demurely with his chain and seals, carried his handkerchief slowly to his eyes, and looked curiously at his interlocutor through his fingers. Perhaps the melancholy on his features lifted a little when he saw the gloom that had rested on Mr. Childersleigh's ever since he heard of his relative's illness, grow palpably deeper.

"With regard to arrangements, I know you were more in her confidence than any one. I suppose any papers of consequence are with Mr. Rivington?"

"I believe so, sir. About eight months ago we took advantage of her feeling so very well to prevail on her to settle her affairs. I remember it because it was just the time when she had worked herself up into such a state against Mr. Hugh, when for six weeks he had kept her waiting for an answer to a letter of hers."

Mr. Purkiss cheered up visibly. Before all he was a man of business

and of system, and it would have pained him, doubtless, had a relative and client of his own died intestate with so much valuable property to dispose of.

"Ah! the letter that, as it turned out afterwards, had gone astray and which never came to hand at all. Monstrously careless of the post-office people."

"It was careless, sir; but I'm sadly afraid that it's Mr. Hugh that will have to pay the damages. Even after the whole thing was cleared up, Miss Childersleigh never quite forgave him, I do believe, for all the trouble and worry she had had, although it turned out to be no fault whatever of his. Besides, it was the only time that to my knowledge she felt herself well enough to talk about her will, and once made, she wasn't likely to change it."

Mr. Purkiss began to feel as if his little chat with Hooker was doing him so much good, that his features must be becoming almost beaming; and that, on the whole, perhaps it might be more decorous to cut it short. He recollectéed too the claims of business, to which, for the moment, its interest had made him oblivious, for, as a rule, Purkiss never crossed the threshold of Childersleigh's very much later than the stroke of ten; and when he made one of his *détours* by Harley Street, he drew on the early morning for an extra half-hour. So he took advantage of the doctor's footstep in the hall to cut the interview short, going out to accost that gentleman. Dr. Pillington was a plump, shining, and usually a cheerful-looking little man. Now his features wore an expression of sorrowful resignation, much in keeping with the solemn scene in which he had passed the night. Could Pillington have saved her, Miss Childersleigh might have lived for years—for the sands of life that ran so fast through the feeble frame upstairs, measured the continuance of the snug annuity that, from long habit, the apothecary had come to count on as a thing of course.

"I hope you're well, Mr. Childersleigh? I trust Sir Basil is well? On your way out I perceive. If you'll honour me so far, I'll walk with you to the corner of the next street. I'm just hurrying home to shave and dress and snatch a morsel of breakfast. Dear, dear! this is all very sad, Mr. Childersleigh, very sad. I'm sure, as I said to Sir Felix, I'd have given her half-a-dozen of years to come—ay, a dozen of them. I never saw her better than on Sunday last, when she attacked Mrs. Parkyns for complaining of a headache—eh, Mr. Hooker?—and now—" And the garrulous little doctor ended his speech on the door-mat with a sigh of the most genuine sorrow.

Mr. Hooker received, with a deprecatory movement of the eyelid, the sovereign Mr. Purkiss laid in his hand, as well as the friendly pressure that accompanied the token; and when the generous donor turned, he eyed the back of his well-brushed frock-coat with a glance indicative of a complication of feelings that might have defied the analysis of the most subtle physiognomist. Perhaps, on the whole, and the circumstances notwithstanding, an expression of dignified amusement predominated; but if so, ere the closing door had shut out the September sun from the hall, his countenance had recovered its appropriate melancholy.

Purkiss reached the corner of the street, parted from the doctor, hailed a hansom, and was driven Cityward. Already speculation was rife at Childersleigh's over the unwontedly delayed arrival of its youthful chief. When his son burst in upon him in his sanctuary, Sir Basil, buried in his arm-chair, raised his head from his correspondence with mingled curiosity and surprise. He seldom knew Purkiss late, more rarely still abstracted. Now he came full fifty minutes after his usual hour, and entered without going through the ceremony of knocking—a form he always observed himself, and insisted upon most punctiliously from others.

Tall, portly, with dignified and rather handsome features, except for something of an over-consciousness of self-importance, an occasional over-fretfulness of self-assertion with men a shade lower in standing than himself, Sir Basil might have passed for the popular ideal of the great English noble—an ideal the reality so often falsifies. Fresh-coloured, vigorous, and inclining to the bluff, he looked the picture of a country magnate, except in being, perhaps, something better preserved than is often the case with country gentlemen on the wrong side of sixty. Although more than forty of his threescore years had been passed in harness, time had written few wrinkles on his broad white brow, scattered fewer crowsfeet under his eyes, and his iron-grey hair clustered thicker than the raven locks of his son Purkiss. Regular work is the veritable elixir of life, if you can only take it without too much wear and tear. Existing in an atmosphere of other peoples' troubles seems to ease you of your own. As our great lawyers who climb to the woolsack through endless lawsuits generally die nonagenarians, so wealthy bankers, who see and hear a good deal of money pressure, of overdrawn accounts, dishonoured bills, and insolvent court procedure, fill their posts not less intelligently long after they have passed the allotted span of man. Sir Basil, while he cherished the fancy that he was the life and soul of his house, had in reality been very much shoved along by intelligent subordinates in the grooves he had dropped into by right of birth. He had given no one cause to doubt an ability which he had been scarcely called on to exert; and in tacitly laying claim to rare business talents, if an impostor, he was at least an unconscious one.

It was some eighty years before that Childersleighs had sprung from comparatively small beginnings, when Sir Basil's grandfather had laid its foundations. He was a younger brother of the great-grandfather of our acquaintance Hugh, the then head of the Childersleighs. At that time the family and their connections, one way or another, commanded half-a-dozen of seats in the Lower House. They made it their golden rule to stick together, and, if needful, compromised for harmony at some sacrifice of principle. Divisions were close and Ministers courteous, and although the Childersleighs asked for a good deal, in the long run they generally got it. Basil Childersleigh ruined himself, went into the City, married the widow of a banker in a modest way, and reformed. He succeeded to his predecessor's business, as well as his wife, rechristened

it by his own name, and developed in it and himself unsuspected capabilities. After the fashion of the family, his extensive connection came in to support him nobly, especially when it became known that he was able to help himself, and that, under the rose, a good deal of Government business was finding its way to the new house. Thus it came to have a name not only in City but in fashionable circles. Its credit in the City served it at the West, its reputation in the West reacted on the City. Ever since it had gone on prospering; and now, although there were many far more extensive businesses among its competitors—as was but natural, seeing that Childersleigh's was kept snug in the single branch of a single family—yet no name in its way stood higher. Childersleigh's was respected everywhere, and no man reverenced it and its head more than Sir Basil.

The old banker raised his eyes in astonishment, with a dignity that was slightly ruffled, at the abrupt entrance of his son. It was with some anxiety, too, that he waited for what Purkiss had to tell, for it was abundantly manifest that something must have happened much out of the ordinary course of trade to knock his Primness off his balance, and throw the very punctual Purkiss off the rails of routine. He looked at his son with the misty apprehension of a man who has no particular reason that he knows of to dread anything, and is puzzling himself to find out what there is to dread.

"Nothing wrong, Purkiss, I trust? Nothing about those bills of Goodman's?"

His uneasiness grew upon him. Never but once before did he remember to have seen his placid son so agitated, and that was when Purkiss's godfather,—the wealthy and childless Mr. Purkiss,—had died, leaving his money to metropolitan hospitals, and to his godson and namesake, his gold watch and a blessing. Now instead of paying out his words with his accustomed business-like precision—like a machine throwing off sovereigns and deliberately weighing them as it coins—Purkiss actually stammered slightly in his excitement; his thin lips twitched, and his sallow cheeks reddened: for since his interview with Hooker, the speculative course of his thoughts had agitated him.

"Nothing wrong whatever that I know of; on the contrary. At least, I mean it's very melancholy, very—awfully sudden."

"What's melancholy? what's sudden? who's stopped? why can't you speak out? Not Barbox, Brummer & Co?"

"Barbox and Brummer are all right, so far as I know, and there's nothing wrong in the City; but I happened to take Harley Street on my way here, and I found Miss Childersleigh on her death-bed."

Sir Basil looked greatly relieved and returned tranquilly to his letters.

"Really, Purkiss, you ought to know better than to come and startle me about nothing. It puts me out for the day. I should think you might have become used to her calling 'wolf' by this time; I'm sure she's taken you in often enough. If she says she's dying, depend on it she's taking out a new lease of life."

"She didn't tell me she's dying ; she's past telling anything, sir ; and this time there's no doubt about it. It's paralysis ; and Pillington assures me she can't possibly last out the week, and he won't answer for an hour."

"God bless me, you don't say so ! Might I trouble you to ring the bell, and order the brougham. I shall drive to Harley Street at once."

"But she's quite unconscious ; has known none of them since she was struck down, Pillington says."

"Poor thing, poor thing ! Well, I'll have the brougham round in an hour, Purkiss. If there's nothing pressing, I may just as well look over the letters and talk to Cropper. And perhaps you'd better send a note to Hampstead and tell Maude. Ah, Hugh'll be very comfortably off now. It must be little less than a quarter of a million,—200,000*l.* at least, I should say."

"From what Hooker tells me, I doubt much whether Miss Childersleigh's money will make much difference to Hugh." And Purkiss repeated with excited volubility the partial confidences of Mr. Hooker.

Then, at length, Sir Basil began to have the clue to his son's mysterious agitation. Judging by the whole tenor of her life and the spirit of her moral system,—which held that man's chief duty centred in himself, that poverty or misfortune inferred vice or crime, and that those who assisted the poor made themselves their accomplices,—Miss Childersleigh was the last person in the world to imitate the example of Mr. Purkiss, and endow charities with her substance. For years past Sir Basil had taught himself to take for granted that Hugh Childersleigh was to be her heir, and never for a moment had he shared the fond though unconfessed illusions that sent Purkiss on his weary pilgrimages by Harley Street. Strange to say, he had come to accept what at first was a heavy trial to him, more placidly than might have been expected of a man who had grown grey in banking, and who believed in money above all earthly things. But in truth, while he loved money tenderly, there was a feeling perhaps even stronger and deeper,—a part of his nature sprung from inborn sentiment, as the other was the forced growth of circumstances.

Deep and early as the love of Mammon had struck its roots down into his heart, it had found a pride in the house of Childersleigh already in possession there. Not Childersleigh's, of Lombard Street, with its stanchioned windows and its swinging doors in mahogany and plate-glass, but the Childersleighs' old Surrey home with its countless gables, pinnacles, and mullions, its vast oak corridors and black wainscots hung with the Holbeins and Vandykes ; the brasses that paved the chancel in Childersleigh Church, and the tombs that crowded it,—the columns consecrated to the family greatness in the county histories. If there was a man in England Sir Basil would have wished to have in reverence, it was the head of all the Childersleighs. But then it was clear that the man to whom Sir Basil stooped must fill a place unquestioned by all the world. Had the Childersleigh property come to him with unembarrassed rent-roll and unimpaired acreage, Hugh was a chief to

be proud of, and Sir Basil would have asked no better one. As it was, he was something of a scapegrace, and as Sir Basil, who had been one of his guardians, happened to know, very much of a pauper. The Childersleigh that came to him from his father—all that remained of it—was mortgaged from its boundary-stones to its chimney-pots. Had Hugh been hopelessly impoverished, Sir Basil's sense of virtue might have been too much for his feudal attachment; but the young man had some money of his mother's; and pending the succession he was one day to inherit, Sir Basil was not unwilling provisionally to advance him an instalment of respect, intending honourably to account for any arrears when he should entitle himself to them by becoming rich and consequently respectable. Partly for Hugh's sake then, very much for his own, he was not sorry to know that the head of his house would one day be a wealthy man, even should it be indirectly at the cost of his own family. He had his reasons, moreover, for thinking that a nearer connection might rank among his contingent assets; and when he heard of the old lady's approaching demise, in the belief that Hugh was on the brink of his fortune, his first idea was to let his daughter hear the news in which she might be so nearly interested.

So Sir Basil listened at second-hand, with contracted brow and deep attention and thought, to all that Pillington and Hooker had had to tell. When he spoke it was abruptly and with very mingled feelings.

"It would be a strange thing if she left her property away from him, after all these years of waiting."

"I confess I don't see that. For my part, what I wonder at is that she has kept terms with him so long. I have all along said his conduct to her has been most scandalous; and if she has cut him off with a shilling, it will be nothing more than he has worked for."

"I should certainly regret it on Hugh's account—although, as you say, he'd only have himself to blame. His improvidence and extravagance have been very censurable."

"I suppose he must have pretty well run through his mother's forty thousand by this time; but you can never know, he's such a close fellow about his affairs."

Hugh Childersleigh *was* close. He disliked having his affairs discussed, possibly with very good reason. In fact, he had transferred his account to Cox, Barber and Co. some years before, plainly telling his relatives that his custom could be of little profit to them, a circumstance which no one regretted more than himself, that the secret of his banker's balances was one he did not care to entrust to his family circle, and pledging himself to return to Childersleigh when the connection should be more mutually satisfactory. As banker as well as relative, Purkiss had always resented this bitterly, which was of the less consequence, perhaps, that there was never much love lost between him and Hugh.

"Every shilling of it, I should say; but then, of course, I don't pretend to guess how much he may have had from Miss Childersleigh.

Like him, she knew how to keep her secrets. But, at best, a thousand or two, up or down, makes no difference. Childersleigh of Childersleigh can be nothing but a beggar. It's deplorable—deplorable."

Sir Basil gradually became less lenient for Hugh's delinquencies and sins of omission, as he began to grow alive to their consequences, and to reflect on the unpleasantness they were likely to create for himself.

"In other circumstances, I should have written, of course, and congratulated—I mean condoled—with him. But now I am not quite sure where a letter might find him; and, on the whole, I think, perhaps, I had better leave it alone. I shall certainly speak my mind when we meet."

But Purkiss, as we said, was, before all, a man of business, and, elated as he felt, his native prudence was too strong to let him see the connection with Hugh hazarded while there was a chance in a hundred left of its being yet a profitable one.

"Forgive me, sir. Do about writing as you please; but I should strongly advise your not committing yourself till we know all. If things turn out differently from what we now suppose, it would be awkward to be on anything but friendly terms."

Notwithstanding their common interests and pursuits, Sir Basil had less sympathy with his son than might be supposed; but he had a good deal of respect for his worldly wisdom.

"Perhaps you may be right. In any case, I agree with you, it's always the wiser plan not to be precipitate."

Sir Basil affected to turn to his letters again, and Purkiss took the hint and withdrew. Neither were sorry to be alone. No sooner had the door closed on his son, than Sir Basil dropped his hands, and threw himself back in his chair in a brown study. To do him justice, his thoughts ran more on his daughter than on the ducats, although even then the currents of parental tenderness flowed and twisted among golden sands.

"I wish I knew whether there is really anything between them or not," he soliloquized. "I must see to that at once, and put her on her guard. She's too sensible a girl, I do believe, to think of marrying a pauper; but it might make things worse for her if, for a week or so, she were left to believe him rich."

Purkiss was followed into his room by Cropper, the managing clerk, who, for the first time in his life, found him an inattentive listener. A man's principles and general practice may be unimpeachable, but you can scarcely expect him to interest himself in paltry hundreds when hundreds of thousands are possibly floating towards his grasp. A second time that day did he break through his methodical habits, and, indulging his solitary reflections over a cut from the joint and half pint of sherry at the club, deferred his return to Hampstead till he could carry with him the latest *bulletin* from Harley Street.

So Sir Basil dined *tête-à-tête* with his daughter, getting home just in time for dinner, and carefully avoiding all allusion to the subject that lay nearest his heart, until the stately butler had wheeled his arm-chair up to

the glass-door that opened on the lawn, and arranged the claret and water-biscuits on the little table. Miss Childersleigh had found her father a dull companion enough, and, setting his pre-occupation down to business, was preparing to make her escape, when he exclaimed abruptly,—
“Stop an instant, Maude. I've something to tell you. Old Miss Childersleigh lies on her death-bed.”

Maude paused in the doorway in the act of stepping on the gravel. Her head thrown back, her lips slightly parted, her fair complexion faintly crimsoning, it was evident it was not because he had thought his communication would be indifferent to her that her father had reserved it till now. She never asked why he had waited so long to tell what seemed to touch her so nearly. For some seconds she stood absently gazing at him; then, as it were recalling with an effort thoughts that had darted far away, she said, with a look of real concern,—

“Dying, papa! How shockingly sudden! Why, it was but the other day she was here so strong and well.”
“It is very sudden. But the doctors say there's no hope whatever—only a question of days at farthest.”

Maude waited for him to go on, but, as he sat in silence playing with his glass, she spoke again herself, and it was in clear, slightly impatient tones; but this time her head was turned away.

“Hugh—Mr. Childersleigh ought to be here, should he not? Have they sent for him, do you know?”

“Mrs. Parkyns telegraphed, I believe; and I suppose he will have started at once. Not that it greatly signifies; and, if what we hear be true, he may find a heavy blow awaiting him.”

“Of course he will feel her death; at least, she cared more for him than for anybody else. But even him she kept at arm's length; and those who have never laid themselves out for love, can only hope to reap as they have sown. After all, she merely left him what she could not take away.”

“But that's just the thing, Maude. There is great reason to doubt whether she has left him cause for anything but disappointment, and we question much whether Hugh will touch a shilling of her money.”

And Sir Basil told his daughter all he knew himself,

“Then I say she has treated him infamously, atrociously, and every shilling he has had from her has been an injury. She almost forced him to be idle; persuaded him to throw up a profession; tried her best to make him quarrel with his friends; and if she has really betrayed him at last, then I repeat it's the very vilest action of her vile useless life!”

Sir Basil looked at her in surprise—a little ashamed, and rather uncomfortable. His daughter was largely gifted with the family self-possession, and never before had he seen her so moved, nor, as he said to himself, so beautiful. Now, there was a warm flush in the face, a soft passion in the eye that seldom kindled there. Judging it by the canons of art, you would have said Maude's figure showed nearly faultless; but

then commonly there was a something in its lines that spoke of marble, rather than flesh and blood. Her features, too faultless not to challenge criticism in their ordinary stirless repose, gave you time to trace the imperfections that might have passed unobserved under a lighter play of expression. Admire it as you might, you felt instinctively hers was the sort of beauty that tenderness alone would never warm into love.

Now as he saw her with a blaze of feeling flashing up through her great black eyes, its reflection warming the cold corners of her lips, her wide sleeve falling back from her rounded arm, her large shapely hand tossing back the masses of black hair from her blue-veined temples, he seemed to measure for the first time the beauty of which he had been always proud, and felt how slow would be a man of Childersleigh's strength of will and passion to renounce any claims he had on it. New lights broke on him, old man of business as he was, and he began to suspect that if Hugh had reached depths in that girl's nature that her father had never guessed, parental authority would have small chance against the two, and might well break the tie he never felt so strong as now. But it was not his way to go beating round the bush when a plain question might relieve his anxiety.

"I do hope, dearest, there's nothing between you and him. A match with a man with tastes as costly as your own, and nothing but debts to settle, would be simple misery."

He sat bending on her his eager eyes, and had to wait long for the answer, and when it came at last, in its hesitating tone he recognized his somewhat imperious daughter less than ever.

"I think, papa, if unfortunately you should prove to be right, you may set your mind at rest. Mr. Childersleigh's a man of the world, and no one can picture better the wretchedness of poverty than those who have been used to wealth."

"He's a man of the world, as you say, my dear, and, as I fear, a very poor one now. He may think any fortune I may give you——"

"Do you really know him so little as that, papa!" broke in Maude. "Whatever Hugh's faults may be, and although he may value money for all it brings, I tell you, rather than have it from his wife, he would crush back his strongest feelings. But you may set your mind at rest. There's nothing between me and Mr. Childersleigh."

Sir Basil's countenance cleared up, although, perhaps, a shadow of anxiety rested on it still. All he said was, "I'm truly rejoiced to hear it, my love;" but a sigh of relief accompanied the words. Maude vanished round the corner of the window, anxious possibly to take herself out of sight, and her father, in his fond admiration, as he saw her disappear, felt more sympathy with Hugh than he had done since Purkiss first startled him with the great news—more sympathy than was altogether compatible with a free faith in his daughter's words.

"However, he'll bear it better than most men, that's one comfort," he soliloquized. "Hugh's very hard."

The Silkworm Campaign, Italy, 1869.

THE silkworm campaign of 1869 is over. All the hopes and fears, the sanguine expectations, the contradictory prophecies, the conflicting calculations of May and April have ceased to be. The statistics are before us, more or less exact, and prove that though considerable advantage has been gained over the *epizoozia*—which, for the last thirteen years, has sterilized this once-abundant source of national wealth—we are yet far from having exterminated the formidable disease, which ranks neither last nor least among the dire misfortunes with which Italy has been stricken during these latter times: grape disease, tomato disease, oyster malady, chestnut blight, whole districts of vineyards and cornfields destroyed by hailstorms whose violence has never been equalled in the memory of the “oldest inhabitant,” floods devastating entire cities and plains, leaving sandy deserts, six feet deep, where fertile fields once smiled, and engendering a disease in maize hitherto unknown. To all these natural or unnatural evils has this much-suffering people been wholly or partially subject during the last twenty years; yet, if we take the vote of the millions, now that sulphur has restored to them in some degree the beloved juice of their acid grapes, we shall find that their most fervent and universal prayer is “From the silkworm disease good Lord deliver us!” Considering that Italy once produced raw silk of the worth of 250,000,000 of francs; that the disease, when at its height, reduced this respectable sum to zero; that even now, when patience, science, and intelligence have struggled resolutely to some purpose, they have not brought up the produce to half of its original value, this intensity of desire is not surprising in a country where money is so scarce and taxation so heavy. It must, moreover, be borne in mind that the disease reduced the owners of mulberry plantations, the silkworm cultivators, the proprietors of, and workers in silk-mills, nearly to beggary; that, during the months of April and May, before the corn, flax, and hemp crops demand all the energies of the field hands, a large portion of the agricultural population were wont to subsist entirely on the proportionally high wages paid for stripping the mulberry-trees, carting and conveying the leaves, rearing the worm through the various stages of its five-weeked life, and finally, peeling, carting, and selling the cocoons. Then, again, there was scarcely a family throughout Northern Italy but kept in kitchen, bedroom, or garret, from a quarter of an ounce to one ounce of eggs; whose produce sufficed, at least, for the clothing of the family throughout the year.

Came the disease, gradually, almost imperceptibly at first, then relentless and absolute ; and the pleasant, if heavy toil,—rendered light by the excitement, second only to gold-seeking, of the silkworm campaign,—was a thing of the past, a memory of the good old times, of the days that are no more.

The history of the silkworm gives little or no aid in the research after the origin of the evil. It is admitted that the Chinese were the first people who reared the silkworm and availed themselves of its precious fabric. In A.D. 550, two monks are said to have introduced the silkworm into Europe. Eggs they obtained from Sernida, a region between Tartary and China, and, depositing them in hollow sticks, brought them to Constantinople. The Emperor Justinian caused appropriate buildings to be erected, mulberry-trees to be planted in large numbers ; the eggs were hatched ; the silkworms thrrove, spun, and multiplied prodigiously. For five centuries they remained circumscribed by the limits of the Grecian Empire, until Roger I., King of Sicily, brought away some Greek silk-winders and weavers who taught their art to the Sicilians. From Sicily the art spread to Lucca, thence to Florence, Bologna, Venice, Genoa, and Turin ; and soon Milan feared no rival in the manufacture of silk stuffs, Genoa of silk velvets, Bologna of silk gauze. Such success decided the Italians to rear the silkworm themselves instead of importing the raw material.

Spain acquired the mulberry and eggs from the Mussulman, and France owes this precious product to the House of Anjou, who conquered the kingdom of Naples in the thirteenth century. Both mulberry and silkworm were introduced into England during Elizabeth's reign, but either the soil or climate was unfavourable, or the system of rearing was mistaken ; the attempt proved a failure, and was abandoned. Württemberg under Frederick, and Ukraine in the times of Frederick the Great, made the same attempt, resulting in the same failure. Only Prussia among northern countries has succeeded tolerably.

If we except Languedoc,—where, about a century since, an *epizoozia* prevailed for a few years, and then ceased spontaneously,—in none of the above-mentioned countries has any disease similar to that of the present day ever been heard of. *Calcino*, a sort of apoplexy which seizes on the strongest and healthiest worms : *crassizie*, *riccione*, *negrone*, diseases which affect their pats and prevent them from climbing to the wood, are maladies as common as measles and whooping-cough among children. From time to time an epidemic has prevailed in certain districts, sweeping away the year's crop, but fresh eggs hatched in the following year bore no trace of disease. Never until now has degeneration of the species, resulting in almost total extinction, been witnessed. Previous to 1848 Italy was first among European nations in this branch of produce ; in fact, the statistics of 1836 prove that, besides the material retained for home manufacture, she supplied the silk manufactories of Europe with 8,000,000lbs. of raw silk, whereas France, Turkey, Persia, Greece, Spain, Bengal, and China united, furnished but 10,070,000lbs.

In those days when the peasant received from the landowner eggs and leaves, he had no more doubt that the worm would eat, sleep, spin, and lay eggs for the coming spring—that the sale of the silk would ensure a nice round sum to be divided on the *metayer* system between master and man—than the Irishman before the famine doubted, if he scratched holes in the fields and planted potatoes, that he should have enough at least to keep life in him during the year. So robust was the race that many of the proprietors of the many abandoned palaces in Lombardy, affirm that in these spacious, airy halls the silkworm, owing to its strength and vigour, was often stricken with *calcino*, whereas in the peasant's home, where the damp, dark atmosphere tempered their vigour, they thrrove to perfection; that now, on the contrary, if they have a chance, it is precisely in these large, airy, healthy halls where the atmosphere in some measure supplies the deficiency of vitality in the worm. Be the causes what they may, the fact is that between 1850 and 1860 the native race of silkworms, which produces the beautiful golden cocoon the size of a partridge's egg, declined so visibly and rapidly that at one time its total extinction was feared. *Bachicoltori*, agronomists, men of science, investigated, studied, experimented, disputed. Some maintained that the disease was in the worm, others in the mulberry-tree. For a long time the latter was the favourite theory; silkworms must only be fed on wild mulberry-leaves,—trees raised from seed, in short,—so the grafts were cut down, and whole plantations planted afresh from seed. Still little or no progress was made until a few enterprising voyagers set out for the Danubian Principalities, then for China and Japan, in search of fresh, healthy eggs. They took care to purchase genuine spawn of first quality; the worms were born, reared alike on wild or engrafted mulberry-leaves, thrrove and spun pretty little greenish cocoons, of which over four hundred, instead of two hundred natives, go to make up a pound, and a crop unknown for years appeared in the market. Speculators naturally became interested, and in 1866 a circular from the Minister of Agriculture to the prefects warns the public that, despite all the efforts of the Italian Consuls resident abroad, the refuse of the market is shipped for Italy; that the Yedan company has purchased in Hakodadi 180,000 cartoons of *Bivoltini*, a quality which may be reared twice during the year, coarse, white, and almost worthless; and that the Valmall Company has purchased 30,000 cartoons of the same quality,—the former destined for the market of Milan, the latter for the market of Brescia. All these cartoons may bear the signature of the local consul, as he cannot deny that they are Japanese, but the public is warned against their purchase. Thus Italy was inundated with inferior spawn; the public, troubling itself little to read ministerial circulars addressed to prefects, bought up the cartoons greedily, paying twenty francs for rubbish scarcely worth twenty cents, and then grumbled because the sale of the silk scarcely covered the expenses incurred in rearing the worms. Nor was this the worst. Speculators, in their greed for gain, bought up all the old cards, and in

the ensuing year covered them, by an ingenious process, with eggs of all descriptions, and again sold them as genuine Japanese. In order to make head against these frauds, the Government procured last year, from its consular agents, cartoons of first-rate quality: *Bombyx Yamamai* from China; *Bombyx Mori* from Chili; a rare quality from Portugal untainted as yet by disease; and a special quality from Japan hitherto unattainable by private companies. To each of the agrarian committees in the different provinces a portion was sent, with the request that the utmost diligence should be used in rearing and the result reported. In this department at least the efforts of the Government are most creditable.

On the 9th April this year, we have a long and earnest circular from Cionni, then Minister, urging silkworm cultivators to redouble their efforts to regenerate the native race; to bear in mind that, although imported eggs succeed the first year, we have no guarantee that, in the reproduction, the eggs will not be attacked by the prevalent disease (a well-grounded fear, alas!); that, as the cost of importation is immense, and the silk produced inferior in quality and quantity to the native cocoons, no pains be spared to obtain native eggs healthy, and in the largest possible quantities. The same Minister entered into an agreement with the provincial and municipal authorities for holding expositions in the principal cities, and offered 42,000 francs for prizes for seed pronounced healthy. Minghetti, Cionni's successor, on the 26th May, requests the prefects to send daily telegrams, stating the quality of the silkworms reared in the district, whether annual or biennial, foreign or native, white or yellow; the minimum, medium, and maximum price of the cocoons; the quantity of cocoons sold during the day of each quality, — and promises to pay for the telegrams. This energy on the part of the Government, the enormous quantity of eggs, good, bad, and indifferent, either imported or reproduced, combined, perhaps, with the total dearth of political excitement, led to a general revival of silkworm cultivation. Never since the disease became general have such quantities of eggs been hatched.

Happening this summer to occupy a house in a small Venetian town, where last year the *buchi* performed prodigies, we resolved to try our luck, and procured from a Lombard friend two cartoons of genuine Japanese, and from a trader on whose honesty we thought we could depend, four cartoons "original green Japanese, from Neagata Yonisawa, forwarded by Sigr. Edoardo Schnell, a twelve-years' resident in Japan." We purchased, besides, one ounce of native eggs.

It may be as well here to state the rules for rearing silkworms, since the prevalence of disease, laid down by the authorities among *bachicoltori*. According to the most accredited system, the eggs should be removed from the cool airy place where they have been kept, and placed in a room whose temperature stands at 12° (Reaumur), and covered with a blanket for four days; then the temperature should be increased one degree per day for other six days. On the tenth day the eggs are hatched, and again an extra degree of heat should be secured. The tenderest leaves, cut

fine, are then given fresh every two hours. For an ounce of eggs, ten pounds of leaves suffice for the first stage. On the sixth day the worms sleep their first sleep. On their awakening, sheets of perforated paper or gauze are laid over them, covered with leaves, whose freshness entices them through the holes, and thus the necessity of touching them with the hands is avoided ; and, moreover, the laggards are left on their beds, to be changed separately and kept apart, as tardiness in awakening is one of the symptoms of disease, or at least of delicacy. The perforated paper, with the leaves and worms, is then placed on matting made of coarse reeds, and tiers of these mats are placed on frames, and supported by poles and pegs. For the next six days about 30 lbs. of leaves suffice. On the sixth day the worms sleep their second sleep, then eat 100 lbs. of leaves ; and on the seventh day sleep for the third time. After eating 300 lbs. of leaves they sleep once more ; then great care must be taken to change their beds, and increase the number of mats, so that sufficient space be allotted to each worm. After devouring 800 lbs. of leaves, they are supposed to be ready to spin, or, as the phrase runs, "to go to the wood." The methods of preparing the wood are various. The old-fashioned system is to prepare separate frames of mats, the tiers about two feet apart, and on these to place small bundles of straw or faggots, with shavings plentifully strewn, and as each worm is mature, to place it separately in the wood. This method is tedious in the extreme, necessitates a number of assistants, and exposes the delicate little creature to be hurt by rough handling. The popular system just now is that of sheds, resembling the double tent carried by French soldiers. These sheds are erected in the centre of the room, and covered with matting. When the worms awaken from their last sleep, long branches of mulberry-leaves are placed over them, instead of the stripped leaves ; as they crawl up, the branches are removed, placed on the ground, leaning against the tents, fresh branches are supplied throughout the week ; then, when they begin to spin, branches of dry *oppio* are placed outside, and the worms are left to their own devices. I suppose that neither system of preparing the wood has much influence on the result. The absolute indispensables are, regular temperature, yet plenty of air, perfect cleanliness in the attendants, the absence of all smells or scents, save that of rose-leaves, which may be strewn daily on the beds, and that the mulberry-leaves be always fresh and dry. Better leave the worms without food for four-and-twenty hours than give them leaves wet with dew or rain.

With these rules at our fingers' ends, and with the aid of our landlady's daughter, who was supposed to be very proficient in silkworm lore, on the 26th April, the day of S. Mark, we put our cartoons between the blankets, and set the carpenter to work to prepare the frames. The first difficulty that arose was the price of the leaf; the obstinacy of the disease had led the former proprietor of our few fields to cut down all the mulberry-trees, and whereas last year leaves cost but one centime per pound, such was the mania this year that during the first week we were asked from

10 to 25 per pound. I do not exaggerate in affirming that in nine houses out of every ten from a quarter of an ounce to an ounce of eggs were set to hatch, while some of the large landed proprietors went in for 80, 100, even 200 ounces. But for the fact that we had accepted our cartoons on the understanding that we were to pay to their owners one fifth of the gross produce, then and there the eggs would have been subjected to a bath in the canal. As it was we waited, purchased a few pounds at a time, until a friend came to the rescue, offering leaves at one farthing per pound if we could find peasants to strip the trees and bring the leaves some five miles. For 12 frs. per 1,000 pounds, a peasant consented to undertake the job ; the countless myriads—each ounce is supposed to contain 96,000 eggs—ate, slept, and woke to time, and grew and thrrove accordingly. Then began the search for *pezzoni* or matting, for which, instead of 6d. each as in other years, 1s. 8d. was demanded ; but by substituting a smaller article used in partition walls and ceilings, at 3d. per mat, we overcame this difficulty also. Now came the question of giving up our large first-floor hall for the accommodation of the *cavaliere* or knights, as they call the silkworms in these parts : we agreed, and four frames with light tiers of mats were erected. Up to this time the services of the landlady's daughter had sufficed ; but now, to change the beds, dry the leaves, and keep the hall sweet and clean, in the full English meaning of the words, two additional hands were needed. Just as the little creatures had been "leaved" after their second sleep, three days of pelting rain set in ; once the peasant failed altogether to bring the leaves, and on the two following days brought them soaked and steaming. So, while the voracious little worms impatiently awaited their repast, men and women with pitchforks tossed and dried the leaves on the floor of the lower entrance hall. Whether owing to the retarded meals, the flabby state of the leaf, or because it "was their nature to," I cannot say : certain it is, that from that moment the native worms declined. The leaves were no longer devoured, the orthodox pearl-grey colour of the worm changed to green, pink, yellow and brown ; some slept, some ate, some grew big, some shrunk to nothing, until one morning I expelled them from the hall. The forewoman, who, by the way, had sold me the natives, was sorely affronted ; but by allowing her to keep them in her own kitchen in another part of the house, and continuing to supply her with leaves, she consented to forgive me. They went to sleep for the third time and woke with tolerable briskness, but when the perforated paper with fresh leaves was placed over them they had not strength to crawl up, and were thrown on the dunghill in disgust.

Meanwhile the Japanese guests thrrove ; all visitors noted the pleasant scent of the hall, the equality in size and colour of the worms. At the exact hour they all went to sleep ; on the appointed day they awoke. Here commenced the serious outlay : 500 lbs. of leaves were ordered daily ; two men were taken on ; and other two frames, for eight mats each, erected in the bath-room, the master of the house

consenting to transfer bath and toilette-table to the empty stables. True, he demurred to the turbid state of the water; but when the servant, who devoutly wished the worms at Jericho, affirmed that the canal was covered with dry leaves, dead worms, and similar nastiness, he resigned himself to his fate, and meekly bathed in the hard water from the well. All that Monday we toiled, twelve in number, changing the beds, depositing the worms on the new mats, covering forty in all, and at the close of the day were informed that, if all went as well as hitherto, we should require other forty mats, and that the whole house would scarcely suffice should the entire worm company go to the wood. And again the carpenter was summoned, and as no poles thick enough and long enough could be purchased, the peasants were ordered to cut down some hundred willow and poplar poles, which, by rights, ought to have been left on the trees until the winter. And forty new mats were purchased, and talk was made of renting the granary, the padrone, as a last resource, giving up the dining-room, and consenting to dine in the kitchen, but staunchly closing the bedroom, study, and sitting-room, against the intruders.

All day long we were visiting or being visited, as the mania was at its height. All the Japanese worms up to this moment promised fairly; and a society set on foot in Venice, for sending a trustworthy agent to Japan to insure eggs of the first quality for the ensuing year, found great favour in our town, although the shares cost 4*l.* each. Among the poorer classes the excitement was intense. Many of the women had pawned their earrings and gold chains (and a married woman must be poor indeed in these parts not to possess both); some walked twelve miles to procure leaves; more than one family gave up their only room—and slept anywhere or nowhere—to the unchivalrous cavaliers. As for letters, we had ceased to expect them at anything like the proper hour, so occupied was the postman in looking after his own worms, and comparing notes with the rest of the town.

During the first days that followed on the fourth and last awakening, the master of the house ventured to observe that the worms didn't seem to eat; that beds of leaves, removed after each change, would weigh as much as when plucked from the trees; and that it was all very well to say we had forty mats full, but that the worms on the mats were as few and far between as plums in a schoolboy's cake. His remarks were received with marked displeasure by the presiding authorities, and a *bigattiere*, brought from Friuli by two of the wealthy proprietors of the town, was called in. He pronounced our silkworms to be, without exception, the healthiest and most promising in the neighbourhood; only, on examining the cartoons on which the empty egg-shells remain, observed that the four supplied by the Lodi speculator were forgeries—neither Japanese original nor Japanese reproduced, but a common, home-collected article. "Nevertheless," he said, "quantity will atone for quality. The silk will be white and coarse, but there will be plenty of it—say, eighty mats; seven pounds of silk from each, average price a florin per lb.; half will go in expenses, but some 300 florins will remain!"

These calculations were soon reduced by the fact that the worms did not grow; either they shrunk in size or vanished, as pins vanish, no one knows where: instead of placing them out on eighty mats, we had to reduce our forty to thirty. Meanwhile, the sheds were erected; and as the worms crawled up on the branches, the branches were placed against the sheds. Thrice a day fresh branches were supplied; on the seventh day the dry branches of *oppio* were placed; and then our work was done. Again the *bigattiere* was summoned, and though much at a loss to account for the disappearance of at least half of the company, after trying to console us by proving that we were no worse off than our neighbours, he still maintained that the colour, odour, and aspect of the remainder insured a fair harvest. "May we make ends meet!" I murmured; "I ask no more."

For the next four days I was absent from home, and my worst fears had not prepared me for the scene that awaited me on my return. On entering the house the olfactory nerves were grievously offended; on ascending the staircase worse and worse; on reaching the wood there was nothing for it but to turn and run. Fortifying myself with a bottle of vinegar, I took heart and proceeded to investigate. The floor underneath the sheds and between the branches was strewn with dead and dying. It seemed night on a battle-field. Still the branches were laden with cocoons. "And what beauties," I exclaimed, plucking some dozen white and yellow ones, as large as guinea-fowls' eggs. "Alas!" said my forewoman, "that is the worst feature of the case; these are *doppioni*" (doubles), "and are worth about a sixth part of the genuine cocoon." To convince me she cut open my supposed treasures, and revealed two, three, four, five, and even six chrysalides in the same cocoon. "Altro che *Giapponese*!" I cried, "these are Mormonites, *pur sang*;" and with the vinegar-bottle in one hand, and the bill for *oppio* branches and labour in the other, I bade adieu to the wood.

To cut matters short, on the following day I set nine persons to work to *sgalettare*, i.e., pluck and clean the cocoons. It was a nasty business, as the dying worms generally select a nice healthy cocoon for their deathbed, and, not content with all food and no work during lifetime, spoil and stain the lifework of their comrades in giving up the ghost. It was a tedious business, as five heaps had to be made—white, yellow, stained, incomplete, doubles, but it ended at last, and the cocoon-purchaser and public weigher made their appearance, and thus stands the balance sheet:—

	Fr. Cents.
Expenses.....	494 0
Sale of cocoons.....	173 10
Loss.....	320 90

Nor does this sum include the painting or repatching the walls of the hall and rooms, the buckets of chloride of lime, the innumerable perfumes burnt, the precious time wasted. On the other hand, I must credit a good

dose of experience, a genuine appreciation of the Milanese proverb : “ *Ofele Fa'l to mestée* ” (which, freely translated, runs : “ Let every man do the work he is fit for ”), and two cartloads of first-rate manure for flowers and fruit-trees.

I must add that the silk from the Lombard source was exquisite, and sold at a high price; but there were only 9lbs. of it instead of 180lbs. which would have resulted had not the ungrateful wretches “ died in the wood.” On writing to my friend I found that his experience was similar, on a higher scale. Eighty ounces yielded scarcely 1,000 lbs. of silk, because his worms also “ died in the wood.” Of course we attacked the Lodi seller of the other four cartoons, but he wriggled out of the business, and it was of no use throwing good money after bad in the way of process against him; so here end my personal silkworm speculations. True, I possess four shares which will secure me five *genuine* cartoons for next year, but of these I shall find no difficulty in disposing, for so surely as next April dawns the silkworm mania will reappear; even those who have suffered most will know, or fancy they know, the reason why, and re-embark their capital, large or small, certain this time to sail victorious into port. As far as this town is concerned, the silkworm phenomena are as puzzling as they are varied. The poor postman lost all his crop; yet next door, in a stifling hovel, a washer-woman plucked 100lbs. of large golden native cocoons, and sold them at *four francs per lb.* Looking over the notes prepared by this agrarian committee for the Government, I find that the quantity of eggs set to hatch was so great that the *medium* price of leaves at first was $2\frac{1}{2}d.$; that with the exception of Japanese original, and Japanese reproduced for the first time, about half the worms died after their first sleep, honestly saying “ we can't work, neither will we eat.” After the third sleep another half failed, and leaves fell to $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per lb.; after the fourth sleep leaves were a drug in the market, and the trees were stripped to feed the cattle. The precise amount of cocoons procured cannot be ascertained; in these small towns the *amour propre* is great, and many sent their silk to different markets to avoid the confession of failure. One large proprietor succeeded completely: in his own house, in the houses of all his peasants every worm went to the wood. Other two, precisely those who brought the silkworm professor from Friuli, and who had original Japanese cartoons and also eggs laid last year by the Japanese butterfly on its first arrival, scarcely saved 8lbs. per ounce.

Of the eggs sent by the Government, *Bombyx Mori* succeeded fairly; other eggs sent in a tin box, race and origin unknown, as they came without stamp, signature, or instructions, also succeeded. The race *jana mag.*, supposed to live on oak-leaves, declined to eat anything and died fasting. A few pounds of superb native cocoons have been secured, and these are kept for reproduction, and the eggs and empty cocoons are destined for the Bolognese Exposition. Here lies the secret of silkworm cultivation in Italy for the future. On one point only the doctors seem to agree; they don't pretend to have discovered the cause of the disease; they *do* affirm that with the aid of the microscope they can

detect the existence of disease in the butterfly; that by pairing off only the healthy butterflies a large percentage of healthy eggs may be ensured; that, again, by the aid of the microscope they can separate the good eggs from the bad. This is a great point gained, especially as it is now demonstrated that Japanese eggs purchased at such heavy price, so difficult to procure of first-rate quality, whose cocoons are so small and inferior, are as liable in reproduction to disease as the natives. Looking over the daily bulletins furnished by the Minister of Agriculture, we find that the native cocoons show an increase on the previous years. Only the patience of Dr. Maestri, our prince of statisticians, can suffice to take these daily lists, digest them, and tell us the result; how many pounds of silk, and of what quality, and in what town, and at what average price, have been sold during the season. Taking two given days, here is the result:—28th May, 16,698 kilograms (32 ounces avoirdupois) of native cocoons were sold at the average of 7 francs per kilogram; total produce 116,886 francs. Of all the other qualities united, 38,727 kilograms, on an average at 4 francs per lb. Total produce, 184,908 francs. On another day, when the market was at its best, we find 46,754 kilograms of native cocoons sold on an average of $7\frac{1}{2}$ francs per kilogram; all the other qualities, amounting to 443,473 kilograms, selling at an average of $4\frac{1}{2}$ francs per kilogram.

After the native race, which invariably sells at a high price, the annual Japanese cut the best figure. On the day quoted above, 8th June, in one town, Fano, 61,002 kilograms were sold at 4 francs 35 cents per kilogram, and in Alexandria, 16,656 kilograms at 7 francs per kilogram.

For some years to come Japan, China, and now, it seems, California, will be ransacked for eggs for immediate use; but if the expositions are sustained,—and they ought to be, as the prizes offered for each ounce of healthy seed are five, ten, and fifteen francs, a fair sum, seeing that one pound of cocoons yields one ounce of eggs,—and if the doctors don't deceive us, or their microscopes don't deceive them, within ten years Italy may hope to produce, as of yore, 250,000,000 francs by the sale of her native, golden, glorious cocoons.

When the world is all astirring, and the world is passing by,
She loves him who is trifling, for she loves him only for his trifling, without any
true love; and when he is well deserving, in her sight he seems but
one of many, for honest fancies being born of art will not meet
the other way.

Woman's Love : a Dialogue.

THE LOVED.

It hath been told, in heat and cold,
That woman's heart is so—
She doth not rest on what is best,
Be't either high or low,
But she will take, for love's dear sake,
To sorrow, shame, and woe,
And yet withal, it doth befall—
As some poor sinners know—
Were't not for this, their happiness
Were but a thing foregone ;
For it is true, and nothing new,
She loves for love alone.

THE UNLOVED.

This I gainsay as well I may ;
Her love is all caprice,
It shines and plays with fitful rays,
Disturbing mortal peace :
It burneth hot when it should not,
Begins where it should cease ;
When fondly caught proves cold and naught,
From troth demands release ;
When free it sighs for bonds and ties ;
Makes broken hearts its throne :
For it is true, and nothing new,
She loves herself alone.

THE LOVED.

It follows not from this, I wot,
That all you say is sooth.
Being sorely crossed, thy wits are tossed
Where passion drowns the truth.
In woman's slight by reason's light
See heaven's indulgent ruth,
For man she's made—when that is said,
There's hope for age and youth.

Unknown tho' near thy heart's own dear
 Will change thy bitter tone,
 To prove it true, and nothing new,
 She loves for love alone.

THE UNLOVED.

Thy logic trips, and downward slips,
 When it should meet my case ;
 What matters it that woman's fit
 For all the human race ?
 I loved but one beneath the sun,
 She seemed truth's dwelling-place,
 No thought of mine could e'er divine
 Earth carried heart so base ;
 Vows deep as death proved wanton breath,
 For trust betrayed I moan ;
 I've proved it true, and nothing new,
 She loves herself alone.

THE LOVED.

Thy childish plaint meets no restraint
 From faith or reason's sway ;
 A man should view all Nature through,
 To learn what manhood may.
 Like sun above, a woman's love
 Must have its destined way ;
 To some great gain, to others pain,
 And wherefore, who can say ?
 But be it bliss or wretchedness,
 In reason man must own
 That it is true, and nothing new,
 She loves for love alone.

THE UNLOVED.

Times past and now by such as thou
 Comes wilful woman's power,
 When self-conceit and folly meet
 In beauty's blossomed bower ;
 But woman's friend will never bend
 His will in passion's hour,
 She stands confess'd, and that at best,
 A sin-soiled poison flower,
 The same marplot, was she, God wot !
 In Eden long agone.
 So still 'tis true, and nothing new,
 She loves herself alone.

THE LOVED.

This peevish mood finds genial food
 In slanders old and grim,
 That in the mind of human kind
 'Tween light and darkness swim.
 Of such like gear thy wits get clear,
 Lest heart's sweet light grow dim.
 Men sworn to war with women, are—
 For life in sorry trim;
 And he's a fool, by nature's rule,
 Who long for love makes moan:
 Since it is true, and nothing new,
 She loves for love alone.

THE UNLOVED.

Good men, ere now, have ta'en a vow,
 And kept it, as shall I,
 To leave the sex, to scorn and vex,
 Those fools that for them sigh;
 Of such poor stuff I've had enough;
 To womankind good-by!
 More words were vain, thus ends my strain
 And none can give the lie:
 A woman's mind to ill's inclined,
 To falsehood ever prone;
 And it is true, and nothing new,
 She loves herself alone.

THE LOVED.

In sunless place there springs apace
 Things loathly, low, and vile;
 So heart bereft of love is left
 To grow ill thoughts the while.
 As flowers in light, man's wisdom, might,
 But lives in woman's smile;
 There's ne'er been man, since time began,
 This law could change or foil.
 So if you will, put forth your skill,
 And Nature's self dethrone:
 But still 'tis true, and nothing new,
 She loves for love alone.

